

NINAD

Ninad

2020-21



Sahyadri School

Krishnamurti Foundation India



Celebrating 25 years

Batik by Puja Anand, XII

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The Editorial

Creating the Ninad was a whole new experience. This silver jubilee Ninad is the first digital version of the school magazine ever. We knew that there were all sorts of options and features we could use online that wouldn't have been available to us under different circumstances. Apart from this, there was all sorts of work we had to do: collecting and editing stories, poems, and essays, making memes, sending out surveys, and so on. Perhaps it was because of the newness of this situation, such as working on platforms that we knew nothing about, or maybe something else altogether, but the seven of us really hit it off. We worked at the magazine, but we also joked around, and caught up with each other during Ninad meetings (we didn't always see each other during school). We enjoyed the teamwork and coordination that came so easily to us, as well as the chaotic energy and nonsensical conversations that took place.

Everyone added their own ingredients to the mix that was our team: Aryan's confidence with handling the online platforms and his enthusiasm about crazy ideas; Nandan's lame jokes, philosophical comments, and ability to find the "beautiful" side of everything; Kimaya's creativity, dramatic humour and her insistence on including more artwork; Tanisha's resourceful decisions and her capacity to stay focused in a whirlwind of chaos; Mahi's quick thinking, her

ability to silently finish work that the rest of us hadn't even started doing, and her stubborn reluctance to send messages in the whole group unless she had to; Taru's aesthetic sense, sudden brain waves and her superpower of somehow managing to miss every important meeting; and finally, Janu's hyperactive energy that could miraculously turn constructive, eliciting everyone's participation. Amresh sir joined in too, with his special ability to miss the humour in our memes and his sudden sporadic bursts of emails when he randomly decided to devote a day to the Ninad.

Our group chats (there were several) became more and more hilarious as the bonds among the members of our team strengthened and we became more comfortable and friendly with each other.

A sneak peak of a conversation in one group:

(7:03 p.m.)

Kimaya: Janu are you ever starting the meeting?

Taru: CAN WE START AT 7:30 INSTEAD?

Taru: SORRY MY PC IS STUCK ON CAPS

Nandan: Interesting...

Kimaya: Doesn't anyone else find it funny how pdwijwa?

Janu: Kimaya that was either a really bad typo or a word that I really want to know the meaning of

Mahi: OK 7:30 works

(literally 50 milliseconds later)

Taru: WAIT WE CAN START NOW

Nandan: Interesting..

Janu: Are you actually kidding me?! Be there at 7:30!

Janu: GET THE CAPS LOCK OFF TOO

Kimaya: Everyone has gone mad

[a few minutes later - 7:30 p.m.]

Taru: OK DO YOU GUYS WANNA MEET MY CAT?

Kimaya: What's its name?

Also Kimaya: *goes completely offline*

Taru: HER NAME IS ZUCCHINI

Janu: I LOVE IT BUT IT'S 7:30 AND ARE YOU ALL
HERE?

Mahi: We're online, man...except..Kimaya??

Janu: ...Get your carcasses to this meeting.

Another meeting, another example:

Nandan: You grow exceedingly strange, must it be so?
When shall we meet? Say when?

Tanisha (weary of the jokes): Has Shakespeare crept into
your soul again?

Aryan (too used to the nonsense by now): I can do any day
other than this Sunday

Nandan (completely into it): We'll make our leisures to attend
on yours

In case you are wondering, we don't have any idea how we accomplished things at times like these, either. Believe it or not, it sometimes took us days, and I repeat, days, for us to agree on a time for a meeting. Due to the fact that these chats somehow only took place late at night, when we were all tired and distracted, our lengthy conversations often contained more emojis than words. No samples of that, I'm afraid; you don't want to spend your whole day reading the editorial.

Making the Ninad also involved meeting deadlines, sacrificing weekends, working extra hard the days we had other assignments and tests, putting up with all of Nandan's lame jokes, and Janu's general chaos. But knowing that the Ninad would eventually reach you (and hopefully get us famous) kept us going despite all of this.

Now that you've gotten a glimpse of what the process of the making of the Ninad was like, we won't keep you any longer. Presenting to you, people of Sahyadri, the Ninad of 2020-2021!

The Ninad editorial board:

Aryan Bawari, Jahnvi Krishna, Kimaya Singh,
Mahi Mane, Nandan Agrawal, Tanisha Desai, Taru Shahi

(Lock)Down and Out

19/4/20, Sunday

Dear Diary,

Today Amma said we can only have two meals in a day. Last week we were asked to eat only one roti per meal. I know in sometime we will only be able to eat one meal in a day, but let's not think about then until we have to. Babu-ji still hasn't returned from the city he went to work in. I never wanted him to go, but he said we would get good money if he went. He said if he didn't go, I wouldn't be able to go to school. But now I can't go to school either.

I hope Babu-ji is okay in the city and I hope he eats more than we do at least. I do not understand exactly why we are not allowed to go out. A month ago, a policeman came to the village and told us to shut all the shops and that we were not to leave our houses at any cost. They made exceptions for those of us who don't have toilets in our houses. They said if we go close to anyone, we will get sick.

Didi has started cooking for us now because Amma says she is tired. Bhaiya and I clean the house and wash the utensils after Didi is done cooking. In the afternoon, Didi takes lessons for me because she doesn't have anything to do and she said she misses

school. Bhaiya talks to his friend through the window. He is so lucky that he can still talk to his friend. .

Amma tells me stories at night like before. She is always sad though. Every time I ask her about Babu-ji, she just looks down and says she doesn't know anything. .

Yesterday, Didi brought out her old drawing notebook and pencils and she drew a sketch of me and gave it to me. I liked it a lot. Today she drew the utensils that Bhaiya and I had washed.

Yesterday Amma's friend had come to our house. She said she was feeling very lonely in her house. Amma was very scared that the police would come to the village again, so she sent her back almost immediately. Later she told us that we shouldn't break rules unnecessarily.

She said people always do the opposite of what they are told to do because they feel more in control, but that is very superficial. She said that if we want to be in control, we must know what we have to do and push ourselves to do it. She said she believed that the rules make sense and that she doesn't like staying inside the house either, but she knows that it is necessary and that is why she must do it. I think Amma is very smart.

She used to teach in the school before the lock down. The students didn't like her because she gave us a lot of homework. I like her though. I wish to grow up and be as smart as my Amma. It's time for dinner now. I'll write to you again tomorrow.

Bye.

Yamini Venugopal, XI



"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment."

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Where I'm From

I'm from my joyful smile, from bouncy days and soothing nights.

I'm from a school full of life,

*From swinging trees to low-life beetles
and magical music of birds and friends.*

*I'm from a school where trees stand strong
like friendship between two friends,*

*From nonstop noise at dinner time
and the silent bell that breaks the noise.*

I'm from a school where wildlife surrounds me

From every direction, and from ants in my pav bhaji,

But most importantly,

I'm from a school full of LOVE.

Abhijna Yaramati, V

A Wild Lesson in Rotational Motion

(It's not what you think!)

It was like any other day at school. We had been subjected to upma for breakfast and had received a spoonful of chana as emotional support for the upma. It was heart-wrenching to see the dry chana bounce off the top of the heaps of upma and roll into the dismal abyss of my plate. This was followed by P-zero where half the class was asleep, and the other half were out drinking water like they'd never seen this wondrous, life-preserving drink in their parched lives. Next came a singing assembly where we chose to sing the most lifeless of songs instead of the plethora of the other energizing songs, and this day became as ordinary as it could get. And then came the messiah.

We had physics class for P1 and our teacher at the time was the ever-lively Raghunath sir. His antics and mannerisms had often rescued us from being consumed by the monotony of the daily routine. Little did we know, however, that this day was going to be special: we would go looking for copper, but find gold instead. We were studying the chapter 'Rotational Motion' (no, that is not the gold) and sir had decided to do a little demonstration for us. He sent one of us to fetch a cycle tyre and a PVC pipe from the Tinker Shed. We waited in anticipation as our fellow classmate returned with the wrong materials and was instantly sent back to rectify his mistake. The second time he returned, he fortunately had the right materials. And thus began a series of unfortunate events (for Raghunath sir).

The tyre demonstration went fairly well, and we ended up learning about

centripetal and centrifugal forces, and also that tyres experience gravity and tend to fall to the ground, more often than not.

The show really began when sir wielded the PVC pipe to demonstrate its moment of inertia. We looked on like children in a trance as he explained what he was about to show us. However, tragedy struck and his experiment did not go as planned. Somehow, his thumb found itself stuck in the dark insides of the pipe, and it couldn't wriggle its way out. This little accident led to a few sniggers being heard in the class. Unfazed and unaware of the comedic atmosphere he was creating, sir persisted and tried harder to extract his poor thumb from the jaws of the previously innocent pipe.

He resorted to methods like rotating his thumb in front of his face and we saw the pipe madly swivel around in the air, finally gently bouncing off his forehead. By now, the sniggers had multiplied into outright laughter and I think Raghunath sir MAY have finally noticed this. I cannot be sure though. To me, he became a revolutionary because this was the only way I would ever want to be taught rotational motion.

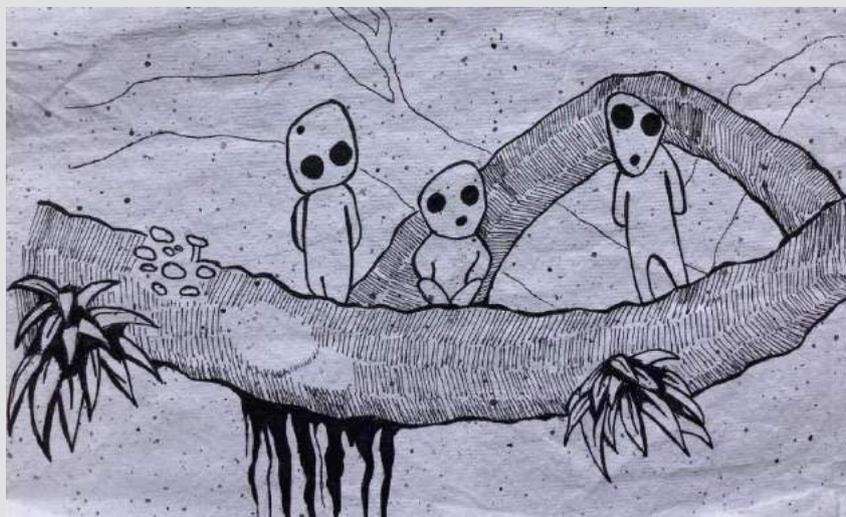
He stood in wild stances and unusual poses, trying desperately to free himself from the pipe, like a deer trying to wriggle out of the mouth of a lioness. Classic predator and prey situation. We were almost certain that the formidable pipe was going to emerge victorious and drag its large prey back home to feed its hungry cubs. Right when we were going to offer our grievances and pray for his good after-life, Raghunath sir miraculously outsmarted the pipe and threw it off his thumb. The pipe landed on the ground with a mocking clonk and menacingly rolled back

to its den in the Tinker Shed (with a little help from the same guy who had brought it to the class in the first place).

He looked at us with a tired yet amused look in his eyes, and we immediately knew that this was not the first time he had escaped the jaws of death. Adventure was his passion.

The rest of the day was ordinary as usual, with an unrecognizable vegetable and an exciting mixture of pulses served for lunch. However, through all the hardships and tempests of monotony, the lesson in rotational motion became my beacon of hope and my lifeboat, keeping me afloat as I waded through my mind-numbingly boring day. That day, I had witnessed the best of mother nature, as never seen in any documentary before.

Adi Shyam, XII



“The pursuit of beauty and truth is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives.”

Albert Einstein

This Poem

*I saw a bird
where no bird was,
atop the long, winding Python hill
this cloud clad morning.
Distortion is dissonance.
Thought ripples subsided,
the weight of me fell off,
the mind turned into
the calm, reflective, unblinking Bhima,
a lake of pure watching.
Pure watching washes off pain.*

*This poem swam up,
a petty proclamation,
a souvenir,
testifying
I was anchored.*

*There would be
no landing
on the wordless shore.*

Anjali akka

Interview with Jaidhar

(Class XI, 2020-21)

Jaidhar has a passion for football. In an interview he talked to us about his journey into sports and fitness.

Interviewer: What inspired your passion for football and when did you start playing?

Jaidhar: I started playing at the age of eight, and it was just like when you start a new thing - you do it without really knowing what benefits it could reap, so - matlab - try karne ke liye. Before that I used to play only cricket like any regular Indian kid. But then my friends and my seniors were playing football so I went for a trial class, and then I picked it up. That's how I started playing.

Interviewer: Is there a position you prefer playing in and why do you like to play in that position?

Jaidhar: So actually, up to a point, my coaches made me play all positions so that I got a basic sense of what happens in the game in most places. But after a point, I stuck to one position, which was as a midfielder. I play as a defensive midfielder. And you don't really get to pick your position, your position is decided based on the abilities you have. So, for instance, wingers and strikers, they're usually really fast players. And I don't really have speed and I'm very slow. And I can retain the ball and I can pass well. So that's why I play in the heart of the pitch, which is the midfield. It's really like a process of elimination. You decide where you play based on what you can do. So it's basically that.

Interviewer: Do you have any role models in sports and what about them inspires you?

Jaidhar: Leo Messi is one example and Kobe Bryant is another one. These two are alongside the many others. Messi, because he's on a different level. And he plays like this beauty, you know; in many places, like it's an art. And it's people like Kobe Bryant because of their work ethic; they are the hardest working people. And it's amazing to see how much effort they put in, the amount of sacrifice they make to get to where they are.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about the injury you had while you were playing football and how you recovered from it?

Jaidhar: Yeah, this injury happened when I was in ninth during my holidays, and I basically broke my ankle. And it was like any other fracture, but the bone was broken a bit weirdly, so they had to operate, and I underwent surgery. And then there was a plaster and all the regular procedure, and it took me about five months to fully get back to playing. It's a slow process. You start with rehab. Then your diet, then you start limping-walking, then fast walking, then jogging, then you start doing exercises for your whole body to get the body back in balance. And it's like a journey, y'know, how you recover...

Interviewer: How do you plan to keep playing football and other sports after you leave Sahyadri?

Jaidhar: Football will be a part of my life for many years to come, hopefully, so I'll keep playing whether I'm in college or anywhere else. I'll keep playing and training. That won't go.

Interviewer: Do you think you'll pursue a career in sports?

Jaidhar: The way things are right now, probably not. I thought about going into the field of sports. I am really interested in sports psychology, for instance, or the human body and fitness. But I'm not really looking to pursue them professionally, so I don't know. But you never really know what might happen.

Interviewer: Has your family played a role in your interest and education in sports?

Jaidhar: Yeah, they've been very supportive. Both my parents are runners themselves. And I mean, they never really cared much about my football, but they were really supportive; they'll take me to this or that tournament, matches, they pick me up, drop me. So they sacrificed a lot of their stuff too, so that I could play more. And I think that's something that I'm very grateful for.

Interviewer: How has this lockdown affected your health and fitness regime?

Jaidhar: Not at all. I mean, I couldn't really step out, but then, you know, if you just keep sitting, then you'll become lousy and then you lose all that you worked for. So, I mean, it didn't affect me. I kept going still, morning and evening.

Interviewer: What about teamwork in sports? Does that affect other things in your life?

Jaidhar: Definitely! Sports as a whole really contributes to other fields of life. I mean, it's a cliché, but it really does, because when you're

playing, your team members are all you have.. and so through that medium, you build the ability to form bonds in different places. So I think the way you deal with people, I learned a lot of that because of the way I dealt with players, opponents, injuries. So I think that way it has helped me a lot, in general. Teamwork especially, yeah.



Interviewer: Thank you so much for joining us.

[Link to video](#)

Interviewers: Mahi M. & Jahnvi K., IX

A History of Ash and Whispers

It is a pebble.

Hundreds of millions of years ago, its body was part of the earth's flesh. Blood bubbled out from cracks in the earth's skin. Earth was a dynamic, violent creature, at war with meteors from outer space and with its own boiling core. Water soon turned the war with its own rage, snuffing out lower skirmishes and disciplining the terrain with its colossal power. Sometimes gentle, sometimes violent, the hands of water shaped the pebble. Water is its cradle, the womb that birthed it, the hand that moulded and remoulded it...

I am a faerie's egg. A child has named me so. Millennia have blended into the dim past. I suppose I had been part of a walkway in a human's garden when the child found me. It's dark, dark eyes sought me out of this winding parade of pebbles that were identical to me. Our dull, cream bodies shared the same mother. Why did you pick me up?

Suddenly, I'm significant. The aeons of my existence have dissipated. The child and I are each other's talismans. The child's fervent, half-formed words rewrite my history. I am a faerie queen's lost egg. When the fireflies made their entrance, when the sun was just low enough for the circle of faeries to emanate an ethereal glow, a hibiscus bloomed. The faeries' other-worldly chanting and the evening breeze uncurled each petal as if they were a baby's fingers. In the center of the hibiscus, I gleamed white – All of a sudden, an awful gale of wind from the north snatched me into the night.

I've been born again. The child is sheltering me now, joining me in waiting for my faerie mother. A child's dreamscape has become my history.

It has placed me into a tiny square box lined with soft satin. I see the lid descend over me, and I hear the child whispering that my mother will come soon. I see darkness.

Human life is a grain of sand in the ocean of time that I have existed in. Yet, why is it that these few years in this box have felt like the world has aged, destroyed itself, and been reborn a hundred times? This shrine that I've been put into has become my coffin. A child's promise. A faerie's song. A moment in time.

An adult, in desperate need for something significant, for certainty, claws open its cupboard and finds a box. Time has painted circles under its eyes and chafed its hands. It clutches the pebble before its frantic, distraught eyes for a moment, before flinging it into the bright sunlight. You don't have a mother, it roars. For an instant, the pebble's translucence is filled with the sun's light. Then it returns to the earth's movement.

Hundreds and millions of years later, the pebble will be part of the earth once more. Water, air and fire will lay waste to it.

A child's promise. A faerie's song. A moment in time. These things will be ash and whispers.

Mahi Kaiwar, XII

Haiku

The blue moon rises.
Our hearts fill with happiness
As its beauty falls.

Ishita P., V

Amidst chirps of mynahs
And the long shadows of trees,
Red flowers dance.

Zaara B., V

The air is so cold -
Trees and flowers swing wildly,
Clouds move very slow.

Sarthak G., V

November morning -
Leaves fall from the chinar trees
In shades of gold.

Minza S., V

The brightest candle,
Colourful in its own way,
Blows out in the wind.

Aarav P., V



When Independence Day
is on a Sunday



स्वामिशक्त

बस कल की ही बात है जब मैं बाहर बाज़ार में राशन खरीदने गया था। मौसम बहुत अच्छा था। हर जगह हरियाली, खुशी और सूर्य की किरणें थीं। अब मैं भी यह सब देखकर बहुत प्रसन्न हो गया। जब मैं बाज़ार की सड़क पर पहुँचा, मैंने ऐसी चीज़ देखी जिससे मैं आश्चर्यचकित रह गया। मेरी पहली नज़र तो एक भूरे कुत्ते पर पड़ी जो सड़क पार करने वाला था। फिर, मेरी नज़र एक गाड़ी पर पड़ी जो सड़क पर बहुत ही तेज़ गति से जा रही थी। उसके बाद, उसी क्षण में दो चीज़ें हुई - गाड़ी में से ज़ोर की आवाज़ आई "पी... पौं..." और गाड़ी तेज़ी से कुत्ते के बगल से निकल गई। मेरी नज़र उस कुत्ते पर पड़ी जो अब सड़क पर ज़ख्मी और अधमरा सा पड़ा था। मैं उसके पास गया तो मैंने देखा कि गाड़ी उसको एक पैर पर मारकर गई थी, इसलिए कुत्ते के पैर से खून निकल रहा था और वह ज़ोर-ज़ोर से कराह रहा था। कुत्ता था तो बहुत खूबसूरत, उसकी आँखें थीं नीले रंग की, कान थे बड़े, नाक थी बहुत छोटी, पूँछ जिसपर बहुत घुंगराले बाल थे और शरीर बहुत प्यारे भूरे रंग का। ऐसे कमाल के कुत्ते को मुझे गोद लेने का मन किया। उसे प्यार से उठाकर मैं घर की ओर चल पड़ा।

जब मैं घर पहुँचा, मैंने इस अनोखे कुत्ते को अपने परिवार से मिलवाया। पहली नज़र में वे भी उतने ही खुश हुए जितना मैं हुआ था, पर फिर वे कुत्ते के पैर पर ज़ख्म देखकर दुखी हो गए और मुझे उसकी पट्टी करने के लिए कहा गया। मैं अपने कमरे में गया और अलमारी में दवाईयों का डब्बा खोजने लगा। मैंने डब्बे से दवाई और पट्टी निकाली और कुत्ते के पैर पर मलहम पट्टी करना शुरू कर दिया। उसके बाद मैंने सोचा कि क्यों न कुत्ते के लिए एक घर बनाया जाए? फिर अपने उसी विचार से मैं काम पर लग गया।

मैंने घर में पड़े हुए लकड़ी के कुछ टुकड़े उठा लिए और उनको आरी से काटना शुरू कर दिया। मेरी मेहनत में से उभरकर आया एक सुंदर सा चार-दीवारी का लकड़ी का घर। मैंने कुत्ते को उठाकर उसके नए घर में रख दिया। जैसे ही उसने अंदर अपना पैर

रखा, उसके चहरे पर ऐसी चमक आ गयी जिससे साफ-साफ पता चल रहा था कि उसे अपना घर बहुत पसंद आया। अब तक तो मैंने अपने नये दोस्त के लिए एक नाम भी सोच लिया था, गुलाबो, क्योंकि वह घर में गुलाबी रंग की चीज़ों से आकर्षित होता था।

मैं गुलाबो को हर दिन खाना खिलाता, बाहर टहलाने ले जाता, उसके साथ खूब खेलता और हफ्ते में एक बार नहलाता भी था। मैं गुलाबो का बहुत ख्याल रखता और उसको हर चीज़ प्यार से करवाता था। इसके साथ-साथ हमारा रिश्ता भी और अटूट होता गया। एक दिन मेरी पत्नी मेरे पास आई और बोली, "सुनो जी। कल मैं बच्चों को लेकर मम्मी के पास जा रही हूँ। शाम तक आऊँगी, तो कल घर की देख-भाल आपको करनी होगी।" मैंने सर हिलाकर बोला, "ठीक है। उस रात मैं गुलाबो को आराम से उसके घर में सुला दूँगा और उसके बाद खुद भी सो जाऊँगा।"

दूसरे दिन जब मैं उठा, मैंने अपनी पत्नी और बच्चों को विदा किया फिर रसोई में कुछ खाने चला गया। मैंने दो ब्रेड तवे पर सेंकीं, उनके बीच में मक्खन लगाया और खा लिया। उसके बाद मैंने गुलाबो को खाना-पानी दिया और फिर मैं अपने कमरे में जाकर अपनी किताब पढ़ने लगा। गुलाबो मेरा पीछा करते हुए मेरे कमरे में आ गया और मेरे बगल में आराम से लेट गया। गुलाबो की चोट अब बहुत बेहतर थी। जब गुलाबो उठा मैं उसको बाहर टहलाने ले गया। फिर हम एक साथ पार्क गए और हमने अपनी गेंद के साथ खूब खेला। पार्क से लौटते-लौटते हमें शाम के छह बज गए। तो मैंने चूल्हे पर खाना पकाया और बहुत जल्दी खा भी लिया। खाना खाते वक्त मेरी बीवी का फ़ोन आया बताते हुए कि वे लोग रात उधर ही बिताएंगे। मैं बहुत थक गया था तो मैं घर को अंदर से बंद करके सोने चला गया। मुझे सोते वक्त कुछ बहुत अजीब सी गंध आई, लेकिन मैंने सोचा कि कहीं बाहर से आ रही होगी और मैं पलक झपकते ही सो गया।

कुछ घंटों बाद ज़ोर से एक आवाज़ आयी और मैंने अपनी आँखें खोलीं। आवाज़ कुछ ऐसी थी - भौ, भौ, भौ ... भौ, भौ। मैंने तुरंत ही पहचान लिया कि ये आवाज़ गुलाबो की थी, पर इतनी रात में वो क्या कर रहा था? मैं जल्दी से नीचे गया और गुलाबो को

भौंकते हुए पाया। फिर मुझे समझ आया कि वो जो दुर्गन्ध थी वो गैस थी, जो गैस के खुले रह जाने से आ रही थी। मैंने उसे खाना बनाते समय खुला छोड़ दिया था। अब इस ही कारण वहाँ आग लग गई थी। गुलाबो के भौंकने का संकेत मुझे यह बताने के लिए था। तो मैं जल्दी से रसोई में गया, तीन पतीले पानी से भरे और चूल्हे की आग पर डाल दिए। आग कुछ देर बाद बुझ गई, मुझे यह देखकर बहुत चैन पड़ा। फिर मैं गुलाबो की तरफ मुड़ा और मैंने उसे गले लगा लिया। इस कुत्ते ने, जो कुछ दिनों पहले सड़क पर ज़ख्मी पड़ा था, आज मुझे मरने से और मेरा घर जलने से बचाया था। मुझे गुलाबो पर बहुत गर्व है! गुलाबो जैसा अद्भुत कुत्ता मेरी ज़िन्दगी के लिए हमेशा बहुत महत्वपूर्ण था, है और रहेगा!

तो दोस्तों, अगर आपको भी कोई ऐसा अधमरा सा पशु-पक्षी दिखा तो कृपया उसकी देखभाल करें और उसका अत्यंत ध्यानपूर्वक ख्याल रखें। क्या पता आपको भी कोई गुलाबो जैसा मिल जाए!!

शिव साहनी, VIII



"Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution."

Kahlil Gibran

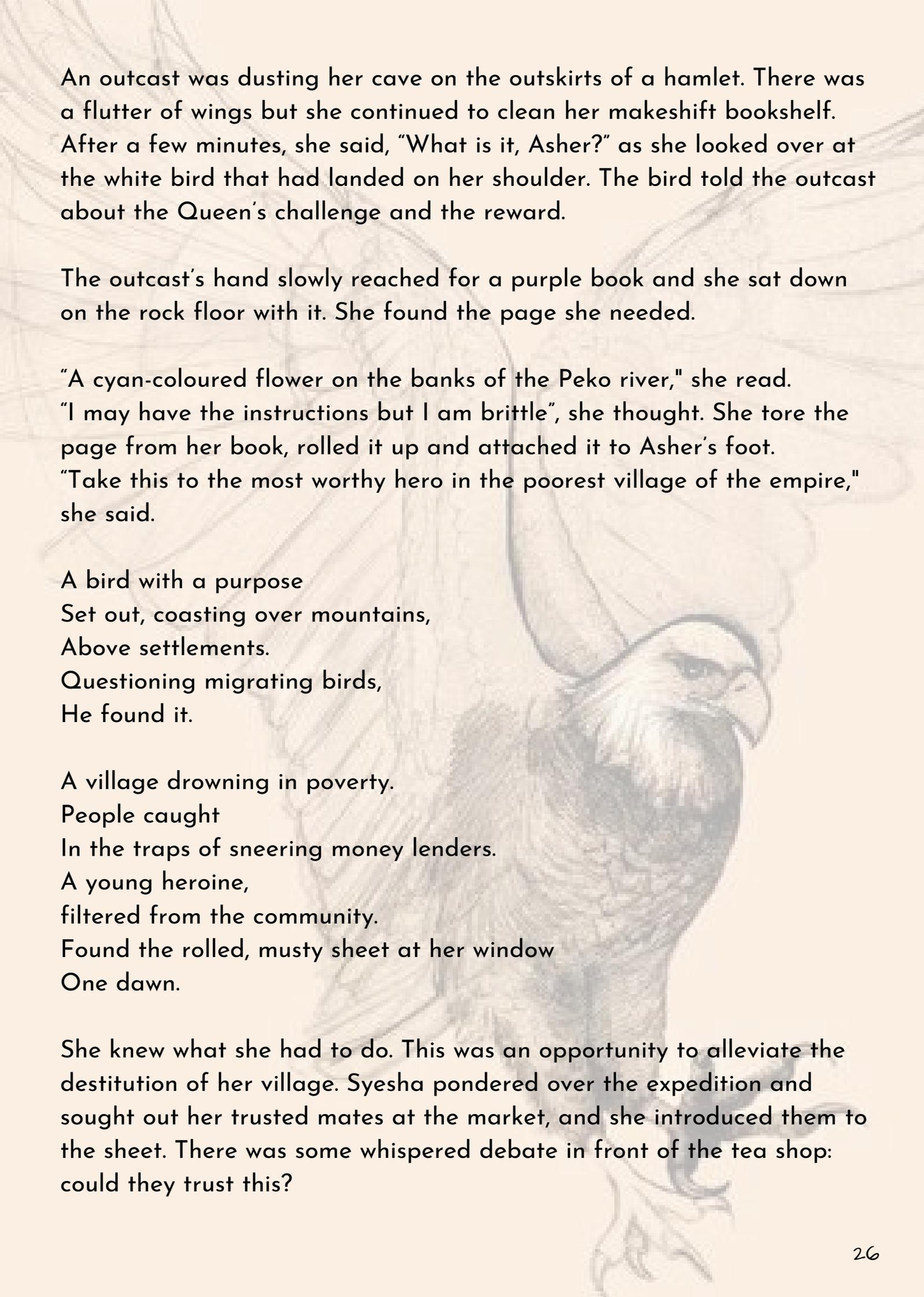
The Outcast's Game

An ice blue, glossy rectangle stood out wherever the empire folk looked. There was a poster slapped on every hut. It was the Queen's Proclamation. It screamed, "Whoever can find sleep for her Highness shall be entitled to whatever he or she wishes." The limit of the reward was set by the size of the empire's treasury. People knew that the Queen had trouble sleeping, but now it sounded like things had slipped out of hand.

Masters of concoctions
Were the first to step out,
Streams of people carrying pots with fuming tops.
Chamomile, honey, ginger;
Lizard pee, chunks of frog eyes;
The queues outside the palace,
didn't recede for weeks,
But sleep didn't visit the Queen.

Then out stepped the musicians
Armed with their flutes
and drums, and lullaby voices.
Bewitching and tranquil concerts,
numerous as the roses in her majesty's garden
Were cast.
But sleep didn't visit the Queen.

Mattresses were bought
from other kingdoms,
Via traders from overseas.
Conversation everywhere took a turn to the Queen.
Sighed the Queen to her ladies in waiting:
"Nothing inferior to magic will help."



An outcast was dusting her cave on the outskirts of a hamlet. There was a flutter of wings but she continued to clean her makeshift bookshelf. After a few minutes, she said, "What is it, Asher?" as she looked over at the white bird that had landed on her shoulder. The bird told the outcast about the Queen's challenge and the reward.

The outcast's hand slowly reached for a purple book and she sat down on the rock floor with it. She found the page she needed.

"A cyan-coloured flower on the banks of the Peko river," she read. "I may have the instructions but I am brittle", she thought. She tore the page from her book, rolled it up and attached it to Asher's foot. "Take this to the most worthy hero in the poorest village of the empire," she said.

A bird with a purpose
Set out, coasting over mountains,
Above settlements.
Questioning migrating birds,
He found it.

A village drowning in poverty.
People caught
In the traps of sneering money lenders.
A young heroine,
filtered from the community.
Found the rolled, musty sheet at her window
One dawn.

She knew what she had to do. This was an opportunity to alleviate the destitution of her village. Syesha pondered over the expedition and sought out her trusted mates at the market, and she introduced them to the sheet. There was some whispered debate in front of the tea shop: could they trust this?

The group of 4 morphed into 7 and the small, youthful band had been assembled.

They began to prepare. The group met and debated day and night, laying out routes and training. The terrain was wild and vicious and so they drew maps, fashioned weapons. They gathered basic supplies and within a few days, the little company was ready to leave. They set out on foot...

They were proud of their purpose,
Opportunists, all of them.
They left the land and ventured,
Into the hills of menace.
Where nature set intricate traps.

But their tools were wielded well,
Arrows and bows and shields and daggers,
Cannibal camps set alight
by flames deflected
From a dragon's den.
Mincing lizards,
Choking snakes,
Battling bat viruses.

Bruised and broken,
Sweating and sick,
Some protested, wanting to quit, when
They heard the flowing
Of water.

"Shhhhhhhhhh", the quarrelling survivors
stopped in their tracks.
"Shhhhhhhh",
the sound nailed them to the earth.

Syesha was the first to trudge towards the sound. The others followed suit, hobbling. Their hearts were soaked with euphoria and relief when their minds registered a dark green river with an orange riverbank on which blossomed an unmoving patch of cyan-coloured flowers.

The company retreated
With joy, and revitalized,
Marched straight to the capital.
The queen was presented
with silver nectar.

She slept for five days.
The empire erupted
With relief.

The Queen opened her arms,
Syesha asked for the crown.

The outcast smiled,
miles away
with a white bird on her shoulder.

Amiraah Wadhwa, XI

"Freedom and love go together. Love is not a reaction. If I love you because you love me, that is mere trade, a thing to be bought in the market; it is not love. To love is not to ask anything in return, not even to feel that you are giving something - and it is only such love that can know freedom."

J. Krishnamurti

Interview with Rahi De Roy (Alumna - batch of 2013-14)

Rahi is 23 years old, and is an artist, an illustrator and a visual designer. She was a student in Sahyadri and graduated from school in the year 2014. She was also a member of the Ninad team. She had a keen interest in art while she was in Sahyadri and took up several art projects. One of her murals was recently chosen by the Tate Collective to be put up on billboards all over London. In an interview, she talked to us about her work and how her time at school shaped what she does now.

Interviewer: What are some of the highlights of your time in Sahyadri? How did your school life influence your choice of career?

Rahi: Apart from things like the scenic beauty and trips to the river and stuff like that, I remember just fiddling with stuff while we were having classes or picking up some twigs and doing something with that, or just doodling with a piece of chalk that I found, and no one would really say anything. It is not like it was not allowed or you had to sit still. Fidgeting was very much an accepted part of stuff that would happen, especially in junior school. But my highlights - if I look at all of my school life from the fifth grade to the tenth - would be, I think, a lot of the events that used to happen. I would be very excited about them. Assemblies, plays that we would do, or anything that broke the monotony of the everyday - Mela, or any kind of an event to look forward to. Also, I used to love spending time in the Art Room, usually in the times leading up to school events, like making decorations, planning things, having those meetings. I used to love doing all of that. So, yeah, definitely all of that did affect what I chose to do later.

Interviewer: Tell us about your work, a Response to John Millais's painting "Ophelia" that recently got selected by the Tate Collective.



Ophelia - A Millennial Take



Detail of 'Ophelia' (1851) - John Everett Millais
Oil on canvas. Tate, London.

Rahi: That was a really exciting project that I worked on, and it actually happened during the pandemic. College was closed and we were getting bored and wanted to do something. One of my friends from Rishi Valley was in London - the Tate is a museum and gallery in London. She sent me an open call from the Tate that was asking people, young people from all over the world, to reinterpret this very famous painting by John Millais called "Ophelia", which is actually based on the character from Shakespeare's "Ophelia" who goes mad and commits suicide. And she is drowning; that's what the painting is about. It's this iconic depiction of melancholy, beauty and sadness; that's a very, very romantic painting.

We were invited to reinterpret it and give it our own twist. So four of us got together and we did a lot of crazy things. We went and got some plants from the roadside and sanitized them. And we shot it in a friend's bathtub in her house. Her parents and grandfather thought we were crazy, and her maid came and cleaned out the whole thing and threw away all of our art materials, which were the plants and everything, and then we had to go get it back! But all of it paid off. In the end, we got some pictures. Our whole idea was to represent a similar theme, but very rooted to where we were in an Indian context. If we were to reimagine this, what would it look like? And also what would we want it to talk about?

So we imagined the bodies as personifications of water. And when we

think of personification of water in an Indian context, you know how a lot of these rivers and water bodies are worshipped in India.

There's that on one hand and, on the other hand, there's the reality of how those water bodies are really abused. When you look at the Ganga and Yamuna as examples, they are holy rivers and you can't say anything against the river because that would be an offense, but it seems to be okay for people to dump the worst kind of toxic material and really pollute the river. So we wanted to talk about that, but in a way that was interesting. So that's what the work was all about, and we got selected!

This project was also about taking art out of the museum and having it on the streets. So this was a series of hoardings that were put up all around London. Our work was up in a place called Camden in London, and it was very exciting!

Interviewer: What are some of the challenges you faced as an artist and what are the changes you want to see in the art world?

Rahi: I think the challenges could be described in two parts. One part of it would be the challenges that an individual faces. I think one thing that a large number of people face is loneliness or isolation, because the way the art world is shaped, you need a lot of time by yourself to come up with something creative, but it becomes difficult to maintain a balance. If you go to an office you're interacting with five people and a lot of your work will need you to interact with people, to talk to people; but if you're an artist or a painter, often you can be alone by yourself in a studio for a long period of time. And that's something that may suit someone, or it may not suit you. But there's different ways of doing things. A lot of people do collaborative work. A lot of people like to work together in a studio where there may be four people sharing a space, and that works for them.

Then I think, also, because art requires you to be emotionally expressive and it requires you to be in touch with your emotions, that can become difficult - managing your emotions.

Again, balance is the key factor, because there is so much intensity; somewhere that's what makes a work effective - that it is emotionally intense to some extent, not always, but that can be one of the things that you want in your work. So how do you do that but not get overwhelmed by it in your personal life? A lot of people aren't able to do that, which can lead to alcohol abuse or drug abuse, things that people turn to for solace, because they can't handle what their brain is throwing up at them. That's one of the things, though it's not really as common as I think people imagine it to be in the art world.

There are a lot of people who are very disciplined and are able to treat it like sport, you know, like being an athlete or a sportsman. You have this sort of rigorous schedule and you train your body. You can also train your mind. That's why in art, there's the matter of practice. It's not just about that one work which comes out, but about what you put in everyday. So there's that aspect.

Then I think structurally there are some issues with the art world. Outside the art world, there's a pretty clear structure, like you work for a certain number of years, then you might get a promotion. And there's a clear route if you want to get from point A to point B, but what happens in the art world and in the arts in general is, because things are more informal, it's a lot about who you know, and a lot of personal connections end up shaping things, because there's not just one straight road. And this happens in acting. This happens in dance and all of these fields. That could be a good or a bad thing. There's nobody that's looking out to see if younger people are being exploited; if as a woman, you're being exploited. So there's no regulating body as such. Which is great. I mean, the informal atmosphere is great for certain things, but it can also be a little tricky for a young person to navigate.

Interview: Can you tell us about some artists who have inspired you, and why?

Rahi: There are a lot of artists who inspire me and I don't know where to begin and end but, especially when I was in school, Frida Kahlo was somebody who inspired me to take up art because her paintings were so personal and so impactful to me as a young woman. And then you come to art school and you realize that for a lot of young artists that's a name that comes up a lot. And then, while I was in art college, Kiki Smith is an artist who's inspired me a lot. I love how connected her works are to nature, and there's a sense of wilderness in her works that really calls to me. Then there's Dale Chihuly. He is an artist who works with glass. I find his works amazing. There's Yayoi Kusama, who's a Japanese artist. She's made these infinity rooms. I think those are really cool. Then among Indian artists, I'll mention two from Baroda. There's K.G. Subramanyan. I love his works. And Neelima Sheikh. They're both considered contemporary artists.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Rahi: Yes, I would like to say: make art and encourage people around you to do art and appreciate each other's art. And by appreciate I don't just mean go up and say, wow, this is so beautiful, you're so talented. You don't just have to do that, but enjoy each other's art. If you see something and you think it's really nice, it's really beautiful, absorb all that beauty into you and feel good about it.

Interviewer Thank you for agreeing to do this interview with us, Rahi.

Interviewers: Jahnvi K. & Mahi M., IX

Thank You, Ruskin Bond

Thank you for creating fabulous stories
Due to you I have learnt important life lessons.
Your interesting stories have made me read more
And that has helped me improve my reading skills.

When I read your stories, I get teleported into your world.
I also feel that I am a part of your story.
Your stories have boosted my imagination
and I am really grateful for that.
I am a boy from the hills, just like you,
and this helps me connect to your stories.

I have some special requests for you.
Please create a second part of the Hidden Pool,
Because I want to know what happens to the three friends
Laurie, Anil and Kamal, the orphan boy.
I also want to read poems from you
on mountains, rivers,
and the people who live over there.

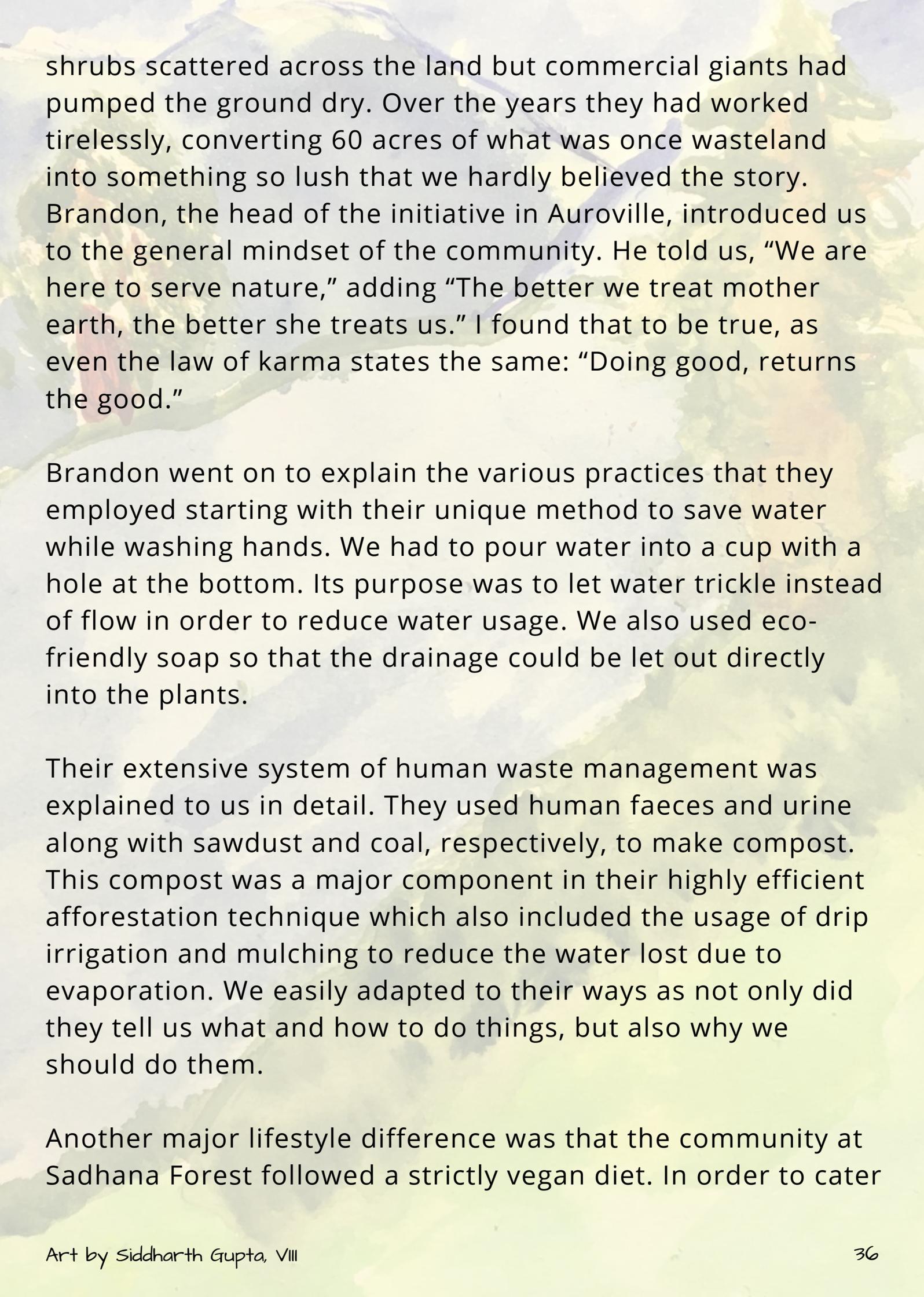
Punol Pazo, V

Sadhana Forest

There is a community of free-spirited eco warriors on a mission. A culturally diverse group of like-minded individuals who have come together and founded 'Sadhana Forest' on the outskirts of Auroville, one among many initiatives taken by them around the world. Our batch (class 9: 2019-2020) was given a wonderful opportunity to experience their simple, yet impactful way of life.

Over the course of the excursion, we had been to various other establishments, like Solar Kitchen and Solitude Farm. We learned about sustainable living, methods of effectively reusing or recycling all the waste produced, and how to use energy efficiently. Solar Kitchen is a kitchen that has zero combustible fuel usage. They cook food for hundreds by harnessing the sun's energy by only using lenses and mirrors. Solitude Farm was relatively smaller but a completely self-sustaining farm and restaurant. We learnt about various good practices of sustainable farming, one of them being Permaculture, a practice in which multiple crops are grown together forming an ecosystem of their own and complementing one another. We went into Sadhana Forest with a somewhat casual and 'been there, done that' mindset because we did not think we could be amazed any further. But they managed to surprise us every step of the way.

On arrival, we were oriented about how to do things in Sadhana Forest and about its history. We were told that the region was formerly dry and arid land. There were trees and



shrubs scattered across the land but commercial giants had pumped the ground dry. Over the years they had worked tirelessly, converting 60 acres of what was once wasteland into something so lush that we hardly believed the story. Brandon, the head of the initiative in Auroville, introduced us to the general mindset of the community. He told us, "We are here to serve nature," adding "The better we treat mother earth, the better she treats us." I found that to be true, as even the law of karma states the same: "Doing good, returns the good."

Brandon went on to explain the various practices that they employed starting with their unique method to save water while washing hands. We had to pour water into a cup with a hole at the bottom. Its purpose was to let water trickle instead of flow in order to reduce water usage. We also used eco-friendly soap so that the drainage could be let out directly into the plants.

Their extensive system of human waste management was explained to us in detail. They used human faeces and urine along with sawdust and coal, respectively, to make compost. This compost was a major component in their highly efficient afforestation technique which also included the usage of drip irrigation and mulching to reduce the water lost due to evaporation. We easily adapted to their ways as not only did they tell us what and how to do things, but also why we should do them.

Another major lifestyle difference was that the community at Sadhana Forest followed a strictly vegan diet. In order to cater

to the taste of people from various countries, they refrained from excessive usage of spices. Although slightly odd, the food was still flavourful and enjoyable.

Along with community service or 'Seva', there were breaks when everyone sat together, drank coconut milk tea, and ate organic ladoos. A fellow member from Germany, Lex, even taught us how to juggle oranges.

Although we were all practically strangers to one another we came to feel a strange connection. Sadhana Forest seemed to bring us together and in no time we became a close-knit group.

Looking back at the time, we realize that there is so much that can be learnt from the lifestyle at Sadhana Forest and imbibed in our daily life. By turning to a simpler and less consumerist life we can move closer to a completely self-sufficient society and contribute towards bringing the Earth back from its devastation. We discovered that it is not exceptionally difficult, let alone impossible, to adjust to a life like the one we experienced in Sadhana Forest and quite achievable by anyone.

Patanjali Pathak & Avaneesh Samsi, X

"The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope."

Wendell Berry

Vinayak on the Tinkershed

"Hello Vinayak, what do you do in Sahyadri?"

"I facilitate the activity group for students in the Tinkershed."

"Oh, really? Could you tell me more about this?"

And that, my friends, is one of the most puzzling questions (which also happens to be the most common) I have had the privilege of engaging with in the past few years.

I could start by saying - *It is a space where anybody can come and make anything.* "Nah!" I think to myself, "Could there possibly be a more vague response? Let's try to deal with this the way our Sahyadrians are best accustomed to! Presenting to you all....."

Types of people who come to the Tinkershed

Disclaimer

*The images used are for representation purposes only.
Any resemblance to any Sahyadrian whether asleep or awake is
purely coincidental.*

NB: Geyser-water-bucket Maggi is injurious to health.

1. The "Gee, thanks a lot for the activity block, I don't know what to do here" type -

And who can blame them? There are times when one feels invisible! Too many ideas running around in your head and too little time. This is not one of those times. The weekend passes by in the blink of an eye and the next week starts, and before you know it you are staring into nothing,



wondering what you could possibly do for today's activity block. If you have at any point in your journey experienced this, you are not alone. Thanks to the term plan and Nilesh dada, there is an exhaustive list of projects that have been planned (based on one's grade) in case one is lost.

2. The "Can I make that too, pleeease!" type -

Every few weeks in Sahyadri, one or the other project goes viral. Suddenly every junior school student (typically) is seen making one of those and it only gets popular for the next few days! Be it the Halloween lantern or the LED greeting card, these people do get one or the other thing made at least once.



3. The "I have some time to spare and time is money!" type -

If you ever saw your House Parent become unusually particular about you staying in the dorm during the rest hour, you can blame this group. Whether it is rest-hour or a few breaks in between classes, some people make it a point to salvage whatever stuff they can from the Tinkershed to



complete a project. They usually work alone but sometimes do manage to charm their dorm-mates into what they're doing. Very creative indeed!

4. The "fine ok, let's do this" type -



This lot is somewhere between the first two types. They definitely didn't come prepared, or plan any projects in advance, but would happily engage in any project suggested or, in a few cases, initiate their own project. After all, creativity is like gravity, all it needs is a push!

5. "The Class is activity, activity is class" type -



Tinkershed is a magic box, you won't find something until you look! Not very common, but this type takes an idea from one of their classes and works on a project related to it. The project idea could have been suggested by the subject teacher, or it may be their own.

6. The "Event planners" type -

In a typical term, there are occasions where a group is given the responsibility of setting up the decorations for an event. This is when this seemingly dormant species rises from the ashes. Be it making posters or creating a backdrop, with the combined resources of the Art Room and Tinkershed, these people pull off a successful event.



7. The "Holy scrap! That's awesome" type -



"Pollution is nothing but the resources we are not harvesting," said Buckminster Fuller, the famous architect. These types take Mr. Fuller very seriously. With their concern for the environment combined with a creative approach, they work on projects and make something from "nothing".

All said and done, we are a bunch of funny creatures! Our ideas keep evolving, our interests keep shifting, and hence it would be unfair to say that any one person belongs to any one type. These "types" were some generalizations I made during my time as the facilitator of the space. To circle back to what was said earlier, Tinkershed is a space where anybody can make anything.

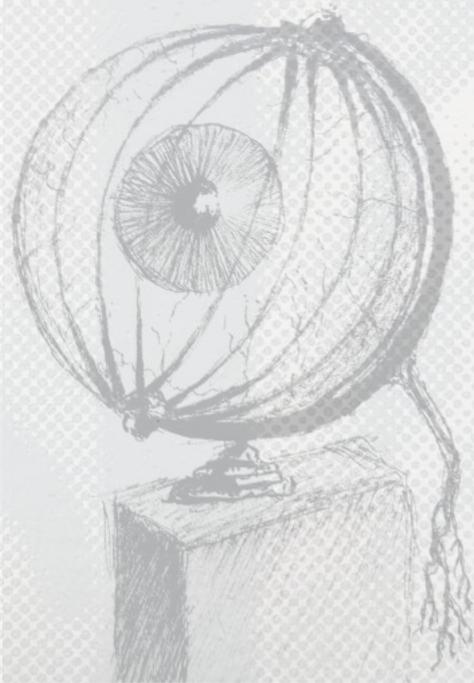


The Living Dead

Hollow eyes that seem
To glitter in the dark.
The fading music
Echoes in the hall.
It blends with the maniacal laughter
of the long forgotten
sadists and psychopaths
That once belonged to this damned world
We call the earth.
Skeletal hands raise glasses of sparkling wine.
Cheers!

The bone-white figures dance to the rhythm of
their dead heartbeats.
Salutations!
Welcome to the Land of the Living Dead.

They smile at you,
Feral grins of predators gone mad.
The music grows louder,
The dance is wild and feverish.
They draw closer, talking to you,
Their voices like soft, hissing songs,
Saying,
Welcome to the Land of Those
who walk between
The candle and the dark.



Kimaya Singh, IX

Robin

There was a little tower by a dump of broken artwork. The dump consisted of broken shelves, abandoned sculptures, shattered pieces of glazed clay, wooden engravings and a ceramic face. The face was shattered on one side, the remnant of the face stared blankly into the sky. I just gazed at it and wondered about the hand which had crafted it. The mind behind the hands that had crafted it. And what all that mind had witnessed. And now the product of that hand lay there looking so sad and lost amidst all that mess. While I was busy immersed in these thoughts on the broken face, a flash of movement caught my eye.

It's only then that I observed the little tower properly, with its domed top and arching long windows at multiple levels. There perched on the topmost window of the intricate little tower was a black robin. It was such a perfect, yet peculiar picture. As I went closer, dodging the many broken artworks, the robin fluttered away, and I peeped into the tiny window of the uppermost chamber. Inside there were three pale, blue eggs peppered with little brown spots, resting on a small nest made of twigs.

The splendour of the blue eggs faded away as I walked away from that tower. The preoccupations of my daily life took over. As I went on, more often blind than alive, worrying about upcoming exams or college work, or what someone said, always something on my mind.

One day as I happened to be near the tower, I peeped in to find that the familiar light blue was missing. There were three tiny pink blobs of flesh huddled together with open yellow beaks. It was an altogether different kind of joy to look at something come alive and enter into the world.



From being naked, pink, squirmy little blobs of mass, I saw them evolve into little miniature birds. As they grew, their black feathers developing, the wings becoming more distinct, and their eyes opening, the upper chamber in the little tower seemed to become smaller for them. The rush of events and the thoughts hurtling through my mind would come to a stop and disappear for that fragment of time when I was watching the birds. In that ephemeral moment, the image of the birds would fill me with contentment and wonder, like a

single note which faded away slowly.

On another day, tired of the daily monotony, I hurried away to the little tower to see the chicklings. As I peeped in, an empty nest stared back at me. I think I felt disappointed then. The image of the little chicks in the chamber had felt like a piece of eternity to me. But it was also so lovely to imagine the tiny birds flying the skies, no longer limited to that little chamber. Three of them on their separate ways, living their individual bird lives.

Ever since, whenever I would pass by the little tower, I would peep in, hoping to see small blue eggs, waiting to hatch.

I often think that it is the simplicity of nature that has the power to elate us in our daily lives. And I'm reminded of Rilke's panther.

Only at times, the curtain of the pupils
lifts, quietly ---. An image enters in,
rushes down through the tensed, arrested muscles,
plunges into the heart and is gone.

- Rilke, The Panther
(last verse)

Nethra Prathap, alumna (2019-20)

The Birth of Sahyadri School

An Interview with Ms. Rebecca Thomas & Ms. Uma Kalyanram
(This text is adapted from the full interview.)



Amresh: I am interviewing Thomas Akka and Uma Akka at Vasanta Vihar in Chennai (c. 2013). We're going to talk about how it came to be that Sahyadri started in Sept 1995, which is a long while ago - almost 20 years ago. Thomas akka, maybe you can begin before the beginning and tell us about that.

Thomas akka: An Industrialist in Bombay - Mr. Firodia - was a great friend of Achyut Patwardhan. His son Mr. Abhay Firodia's two children came to Rishi Valley and while they were there Mr. Firodia came to visit the grandchildren. He went around, he saw everything, saw how free children were with the teachers and how happy they were, and in everything, and then he went ... my husband was the bursar then ... he went to him and said, "Mr. Thomas this is not a school, this is a philosophy in action."

Amresh: This would have been Navalbhai Firodia, who was close to Achyut-ji.

Thomas akka: Yes, then he went back and told Achyut-ji, “I will give you land in Poona.” Your Foundation must start a school like this. That is how the whole thing happened. Achyutji said yes. And then ... we both went there. Okay, now who is to oversee the campus? So, then Uma told me, there is a family friend of theirs, one Group Captain Sivaram who had retired...

Amresh : And obviously with his background he would be able to...

Uma akka: Administration. We knew him. Somehow it just clicked.

Thomas akka: Initially, we both stayed with Pama Patwardhan at Priyali in Poona. Pama-ji had given us a newspaper advertisement: a school is going to start, and so and so from Rishi Valley, people with considerable experience, are going to be in charge, and applications were asked for; and several applications came. We were in Priyali at that time, and Uma and I would sit and go through the applications.

Amresh: In Pune itself, while you were in Priyali.

Thomas akka: Yes. Now where do we administer the tests? Fortunately for us, there was a parent of Rishi Valley School who was running a school there. So we requested her. She gave the school at our disposal. For what? For administering the tests, interviewing the children and even for appointing teachers. The teachers whom we asked to come for an interview, we made them take classes there. Take classes and observe. We went through all that and then, finally, we moved in.

Amresh: So you set up shop in Priyali ... and you started to prepare the ground, have all the interviews, admission of students and teachers - all of that was being initiated. And then what?

Thomas akka: Then we moved in. You know Sahyadri, don't you?

Amresh: Yes, of course.

Thomas akka: You know, we didn't move up. Down there, there were some dilapidated buildings - there were two rooms. One room for me and Uma, and one room for Sivaram. With a common bathroom, okay! Poor Sivaram would make us our morning bed coffee and wake us up. But for him, we wouldn't have survived there. Y'know, in the true military sense ... and then when it started raining, Uma didn't know where to put her leg, I didn't know where to put my leg, my head this way, that way!

Amresh: So these would be the shacks that are there just opposite the checkpoint right now. There are some support staff members' families staying there. That's where you would have stayed.

Uma akka: You can't believe it...

Thomas akka: Study Centre and all were not there at all.

Amresh: Were these the buildings immediately at the checkpoint or was it at the outer checkpoint?

Uma akka: No, just opposite.

Amresh : Just as you come down the incline and straight ahead. Isn't it?

Thomas akka: That is where it was. But we saw to it that the staff whom we appointed were all given good rooms on the top. Then one good thing that Pama-ji had ... was that the Dining hall was given on contract to one Gole brothers.

Amresh: Yes, Captain Cook.

Amresh: It is well known that you initially had plans of having only 60 students, but you actually started with 100. Could you say something about that?

Uma akka: Because parents, I mean prospective parents, came to know that the

two of us were involved with that. They knew that we came with the experience of having been in a residential school like Rishi Valley. So that was the kind of trust that we started with. We had to start with 100 students.

Amresh: Did you have accommodation for a 100? How did you manage, considering that initially the plan was for sixty?

Uma akka: I know.

Amresh: Did you have room for the additional 40 students?

Thomas akka: There were no bunker beds, were there?

Uma akka: There were... they had that. But then with the leaking roofs they had to keep shifting, you know!

Amresh: So in Sept 1995, which were the buildings that had come up above on the main campus of the school apart from those shacks which were near the current checkpost?

Uma akka: The school building, Dining Hall, Sr. Auditorium...

Amresh: It was an open... there were no walls...

Uma akka: And then, I think, two hostels were there along the Dining Hall.

Amresh: Indrayani, probably...

Uma akka: ... and then opposite the Dining Hall.

Amresh: Vishakha... So, two dormitories and the Dining Hall and then the classrooms...

Uma akka: Yeah, and the library. That was another very important area where we felt, y'know ... we did a lot of shopping in Pune, picked up books and

everything... That was very very nice. We knew that we needed these things for the children to feel involved. We started with a very good library.

Thomas akka: And we also invited Gautam, Kabir, Dr. Parchure. For some kind of orientation of the teachers. It was very good. Otherwise you know how do you ...?

Amresh: ... orient the teachers to the new culture... What about the trees ? When did Gogate-ji start to visit the school and plant the saplings?

Uma akka: Oh, immediately!

Amresh: Right from the beginning?

Uma akka: Immediately. And then that was the other thing, since you talked of Gogate-ji. When we went the first time - and I had always been very deeply touched by Astachal in Rishi Valley - so I really wanted that ... for the children also to get involved with that. I saw that little hillock there. Ideal, with the sun setting over the river, so I said “Astachal”!

And then I didn't want to just thrust something on the children, I wanted to sort of chat with them and tell them. I said, “Evenings, you know. We get up at 5.30 in the morning, have a packed day and the brain is going round and round with no rest at all and then what's the point in being located in such a beautiful place? Shouldn't we have some time for ourselves to, you know, enjoy, appreciate what we have. And then I told them. I used to sort of take them along in decision making... “This is the place. Shall we take a break in the evening and sit there for a while?”

Amresh: So Astachal also started from the first year itself?

Uma akka: Oh, yes, immediately. There is something else I will never forget. One student comes from ... they were all very deeply touched by that time that they had for themselves. Very, very deeply touched. One girl comes running to me, and they were all... we were very close, all together, y'know. She comes and... “Uma Akka, I had to tell you something.”

I said, “Yes, what?”

“You know I had been on a collision course with one of my classmates, been in a bad shape and that has been bothering me also but I didn't know how to resolve it, and today Astachal...”

I will never forget this, Amresh.

“I saw two clouds converging ... coming, and I was quite sure they were going to clash. And I found that they merged very beautifully with each other. I decided I am going to talk to her and sort it out...”

Amresh: What a lovely story.

Uma akka: That’s the kind of rapport one also had, y’know... a small family, literally growing up together.

Amresh: One has heard many stories of students in the very early years having this strong bond with the teachers.

Thomas akka: I must also say that when Thomas came from Trivandrum and he saw everything, he was so impressed. Then when I left with him, we had planned to admit only 60. Two weeks later when I came back, it was 100!

Amresh: Yeah, must have been a surprise!

Thomas akka: I don't know whether I should say this in front of Uma. She worked so hard and earned the love and respect of the parents. The parents had such trust in her. Then you know, September 10th, formally the school opened. Pupulji came, R. Venkatraman, the ex-president of India came all the way from Chennai and we had a big event.

Amresh: When was this?

Uma akka: In that same year.

Amresh: After the beginning, after school had opened?

Thomas akka: September 10th. School had opened earlier but the formal opening.

Amresh: Oh, I see! Now this is an interesting bit of history, because somehow in our minds we had assumed that the school began on the 10th of September.

Thomas akka: Pupulji had come. R. Venkatraman. And we saw that day everybody worked very hard. All the parents were there. Group Captain Sivaram, fully dressed, picking up bricks and stones from around the buildings before the guests arrived. You know, it was that kind of hard work....

Amresh: We have several good pictures of that event with R. Venkatraman, Pupulji, all of you...

Uma akka: Having had Sivaram and Shashi to start with...

Amresh: It must have been immensely helpful.

Amresh: Let's talk a little bit about the extra-curricular activities in that first year, because students often ask us, "When did the sports day begin, and was it in the first year?" and so on. Could you just say a bit about that?

Uma akka: I was coming to that. A very fortunate thing was to have started with games and PT right from day one and with Kavita Upasani - Shashi's wife - and Mahesh Pandey there, we had music and dance classes, assemblies, and since Kavita had already been exposed to this - she was in Uttarkashi - so she knew some of the school songs. She started teaching straight away, right from day one, as if the school had been in existence for a while. That's how, thanks to these people, that was made possible.

Amresh: Did you also begin with yoga and Sanskrit?

Uma akka: Yoga, yes. Sanskrit, I am not sure.

Amresh: What about music, for example, sitar, and so on. Were the teachers coming from Pune?

Uma akka: Yes. I had already met the sitar teacher in Pamaji's house, and Kavita with music - everything from day one - and dance with Mahesh Pandey.

Amresh: Yes, Bharatnatyam, sitar, vocal Hindustani music, games... How many teachers did you begin with?

Uma akka: Twelve.

Amresh: Twelve teachers...

Uma akka: 100 students.

Amresh: ... the two of you, and 100 students.

Thomas akka: What two of us? I was not there. I was going to Trivandrum, coming back. Whenever I came back, I stayed for three weeks.

Amresh: So it was Uma akka with 12 teachers, yes?

Uma akka: Yeah.

Amresh: And Sivaram and Shashi, and the dining hall staff.

Uma akka: And the doctor, the school doctor.

Amresh: The school doctor was also there. There may have been a few buildings along that road that goes down, on both sides or on one side?

Uma akka: That came later, much later.

Amresh: So, where was the doctor available?

Uma akka: Opposite the office, main entrance to the school? Just opposite that. That was the medical.

Amresh: The building exactly opposite the oval garden, the porch.

Uma akka: Directly opposite. But then... everywhere leaking roofs and, oh my god, the children had to put up with a lot but somewhere we were able to keep the morale up. We had a happy group of people there...

Amresh: So you were there for...

Uma akka: '95 to '98, yeah.

Amresh: In these three years, did any other buildings come up?

Uma akka: They'd just started I think... Because repairs had to be done here... From the library, I think that work had started.

Amresh: The Art Room would have come up later?

Uma akka: Later. Otherwise, somehow the children felt happy. Parents were very, very supportive. They knew that their children were being looked after.

Amresh: And many of them would have come from Mumbai?

Uma akka: Mumbai. Mostly from Mumbai. Pune and Mumbai. And they helped with a fund-raising effort that we had. Mahesh was in-charge of the choreography. We did that in Pune. What was the title of that?

Amresh: "This Matter of Culture," that programme that you held in Pune...

Uma akka: ... "This Matter of Culture", we had all the students.

Amresh: That happened in which year? Was it in the first year itself?

Uma akka: No, no... '97. "This Matter of Culture". Coming to that, if I may... After having been in Rishi Valley the culture class was something which had left a very deep impression in me.

Amresh: Please go on.

Uma akka: So, Culture Class, and I was very keen that we should introduce that in Sahyadri as well. At the same time I didn't want to just thrust something, just put it on the timetable and, you know, tell the children...

So I had the seventh standard: they were the seniormost. We met just outside of the Principal's office. We all sat together there and we just started talking about what you mean by culture. And they started with the usual

dance, music. I said, "Is that all there is to it? What about these other words, like sericulture, agriculture? I said, "Is there something more to it?" One of the girls says, "Cultivation of the mind, akka."

So, then we started... "Maybe there is something to it... how does one go about this? Can we have some space during the day other than academics to go into such aspects of growth in terms of cultivation of mind...? So can we put some time?" I said, "This is perhaps what we should call the culture classes and shall we do that? Where it will be, not like the teacher comes and says something, communicates and goes off. It's not like that at all. Where there's equal participation. They enjoyed it. Culture classes became a big hit.

Amresh: Very nice. So is that how then there was a natural flow from this conversation into "This Matter of Culture" as a school event.

Uma akka: Yes, great time, and having Mahesh Pandey there so the dance and everything, and since I was very deeply interested in all this, together we could create something. And the parents gave complete support. For fund-raising...

Amresh: Can you say something, Uma akka, about the school magazine 'Ninad'? When might that have started?

Uma akka: Within a year, I think, it started.

Amresh: And there was this song book which is called 'Geet Gunjan' in Sahyadri?

Uma akka: Yeah, that came later.

Amresh : That came a little later? But...

Uma akka: Earlier we used to have xeroxed copies of...

Amresh: But Geet Gunjan had come into being before you left?

Uma akka: No, after.

Amresh: What about Sports Day? Would they have had a Sports Day in school? Right from the first year?

Uma akka: Second year.

Amresh: So now some trivia about the Dining hall. Tell us what the students really loved.

Uma akka: Before we go to the students, I remember once entering with Pama-ji, the whole day you know challenges... entering for lunch into the dining hall and Pama-ji telling me, Uma-ji, this is one thing we got right. And that would really lift one's morale up you know because everything was a challenge, every step was a challenge. And then you come to the dining hall and the food was fantastic.

Amresh: When you say great, in what way, was there dessert... and strawberries?

Uma akka: Everything...and the quality of food. Sabzi and daal, top class. As I said, Pamaji, I'll never forget him saying, "This is one thing we got right Uma-ji."

Amresh: Were there any other resource persons who visited in these years?

Uma akka: Sunil Shanbag came there and the first comment he made was when heard the assembly and then saw Mahesh Pande's dance classes. He tells me, Uma Akka, dance and music are your strong points, theatre is not.

So I remember telling Sunil, why do you think I called you? Just the reason why I want you here.

Amresh: Sunil Shanbag continued his association with the school for many years. Was he involved with “This Matter of Culture” as well?

Uma akka: Completely... The idea of “This Matter of Culture” came about because of the culture classes.

Thomas akka: Everything was there right from the beginning - games, dance, music, library, plays, everything right from the beginning. Well, for three years, Uma helped the place with great elan and... the school was growing...

Amresh: Would parents have had some concerns about the fact that this was a campus out in the middle of nowhere? There wasn't really a compound wall, I don't know if the barbed wire boundary had been created at that time, there was nothing, right? The school was sitting on top of the hill, so there was a natural boundary. But then you had the leopards come up, right?

Uma akka: Yes, I have actually seen. I think both of us coming up the ghat road, one day we saw a tiger... leopard, god knows, in the dark.

Amresh: In retrospect, after several years, I think it will be seen as a good decision to have created a school a little away from the city.

Uma akka: Yes.

Amresh: Thank you, Uma akka and Thomas akka for this nice, long conversation.



Breaking new ground



Before the beginning

White Poha for Tea



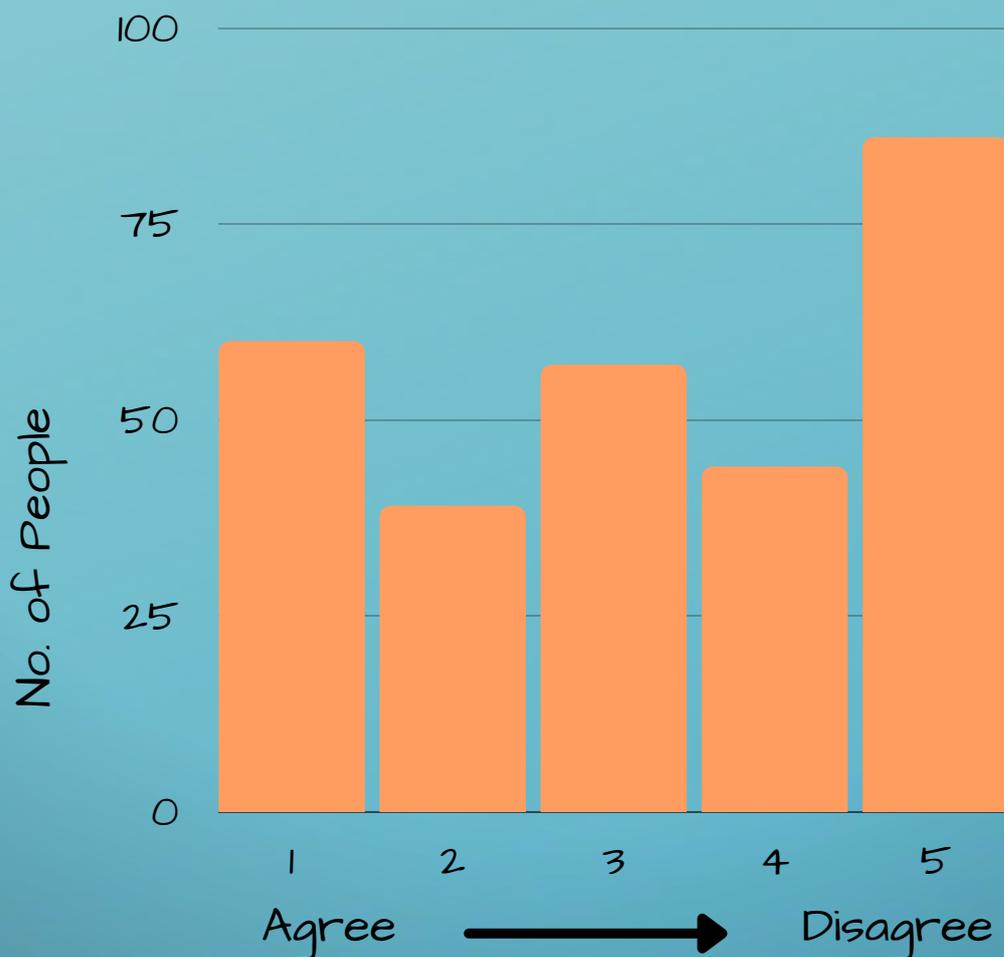
When you bunk PT and Himanshu sir does not call out your name



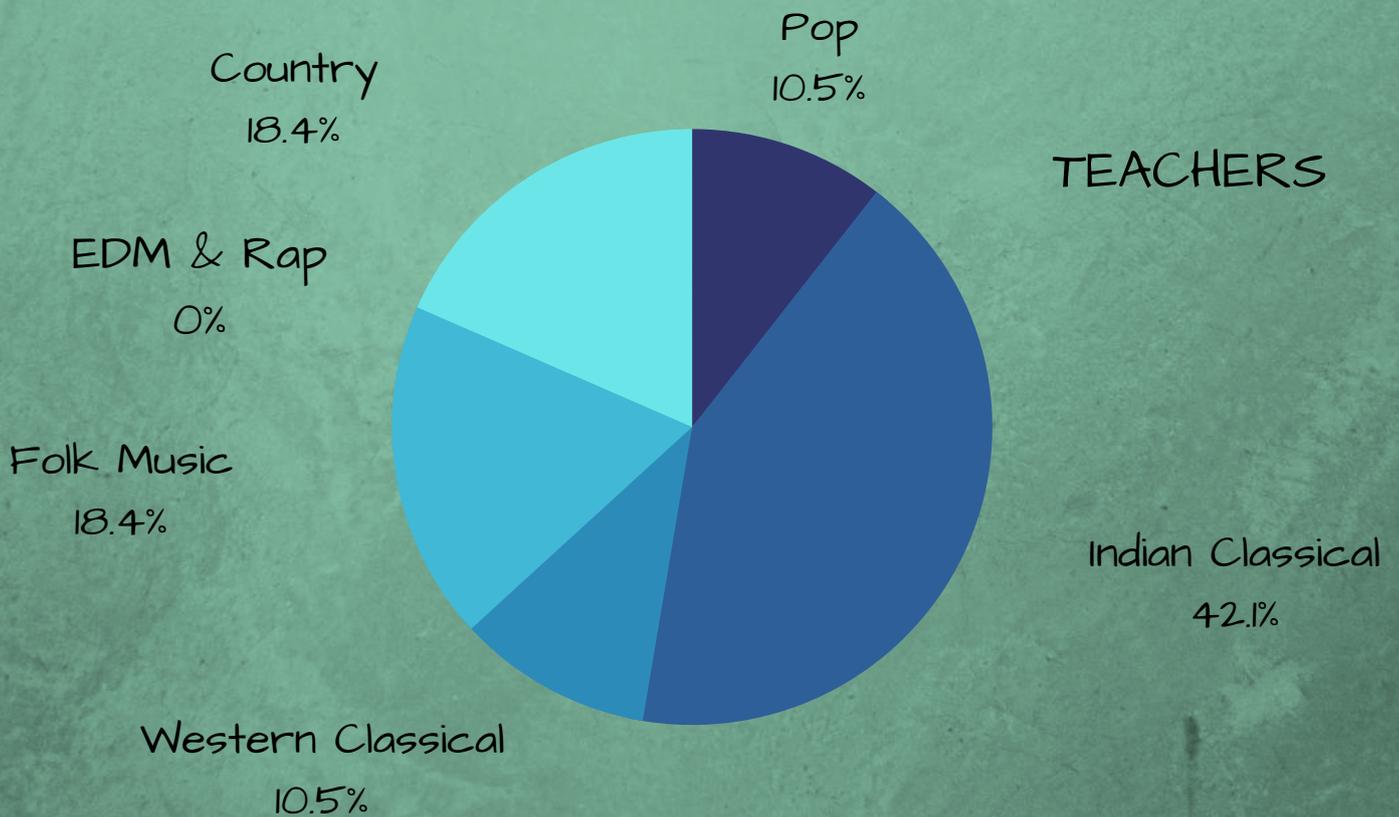
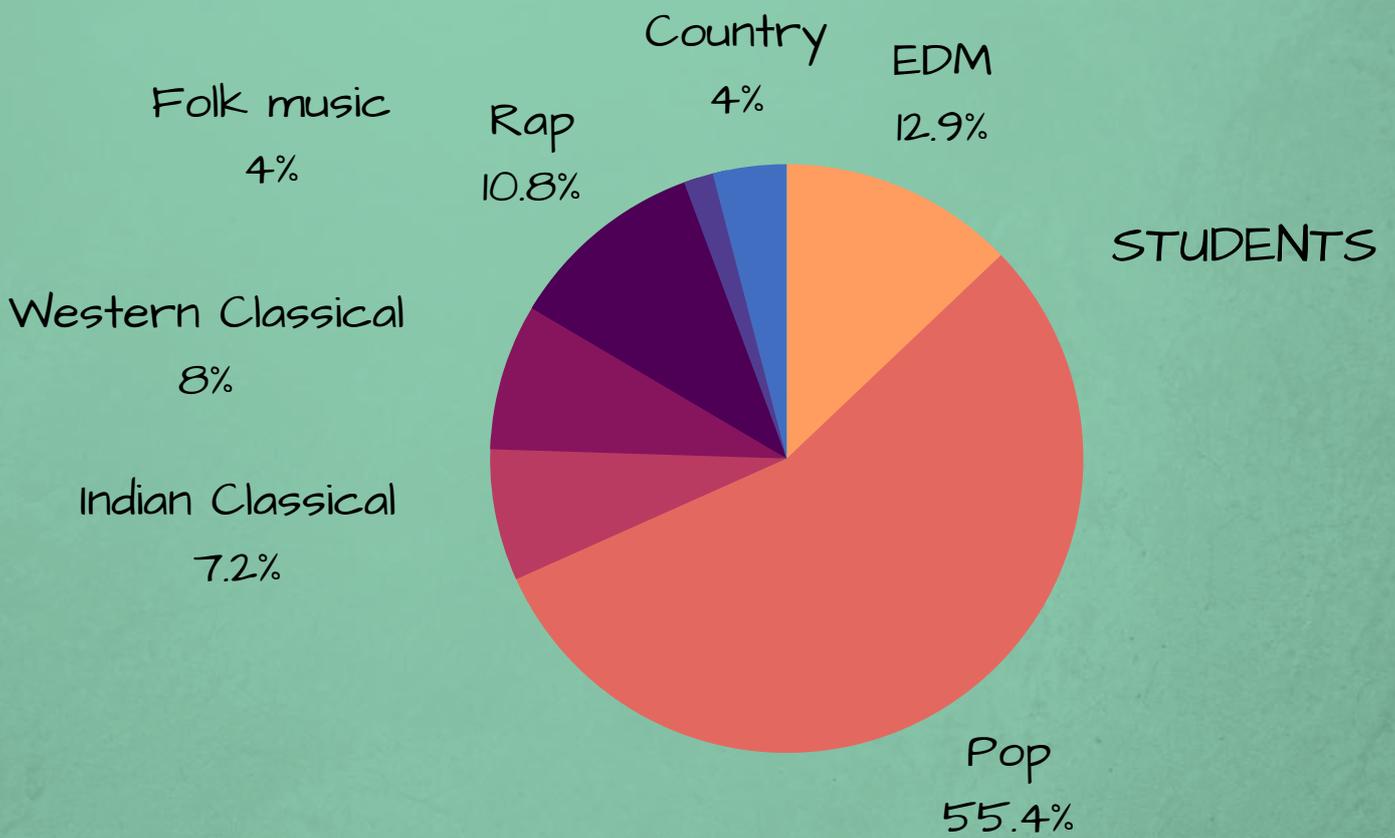
SURVEYS

Surveys - a ritual of every Sahyadri newsletter and, of course, the much-awaited Ninad! Each year the survey statistics reveal something unknown about the school or about the preferences of the majority. But this year's Ninad team took a different take on this ritual. From profound questions like "How important is success in life?" to humorous ones like "Is stealing umbrellas justified?" The answers to all these questions will definitely reveal something intriguing about the school. Also keeping in mind the chaotic year of 2020 and online classes, there's definitely a pinch of that too. Hope you enjoy our very experimental, and sometimes insightful, survey!

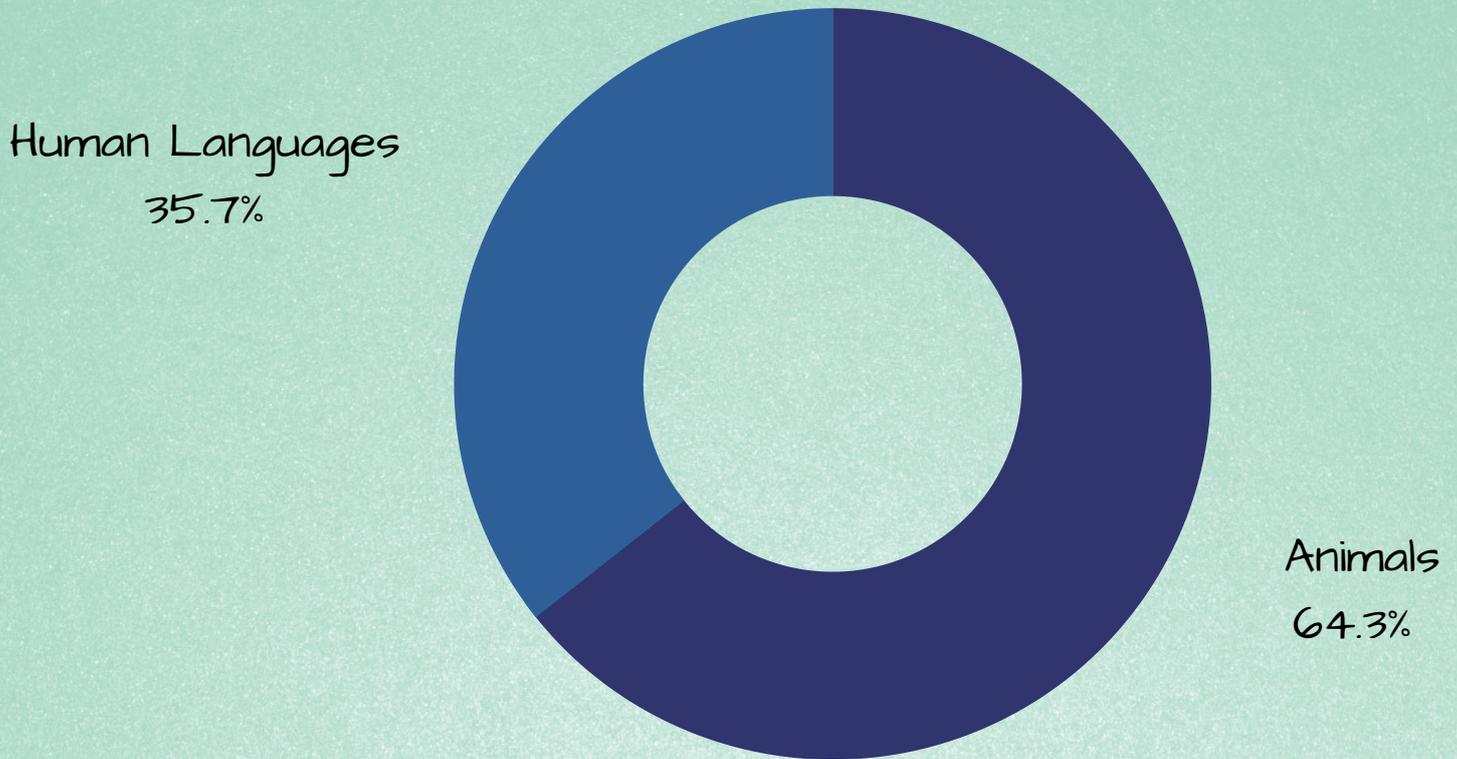
Stealing umbrellas on a rainy day is justified
(Scale of 1-5)



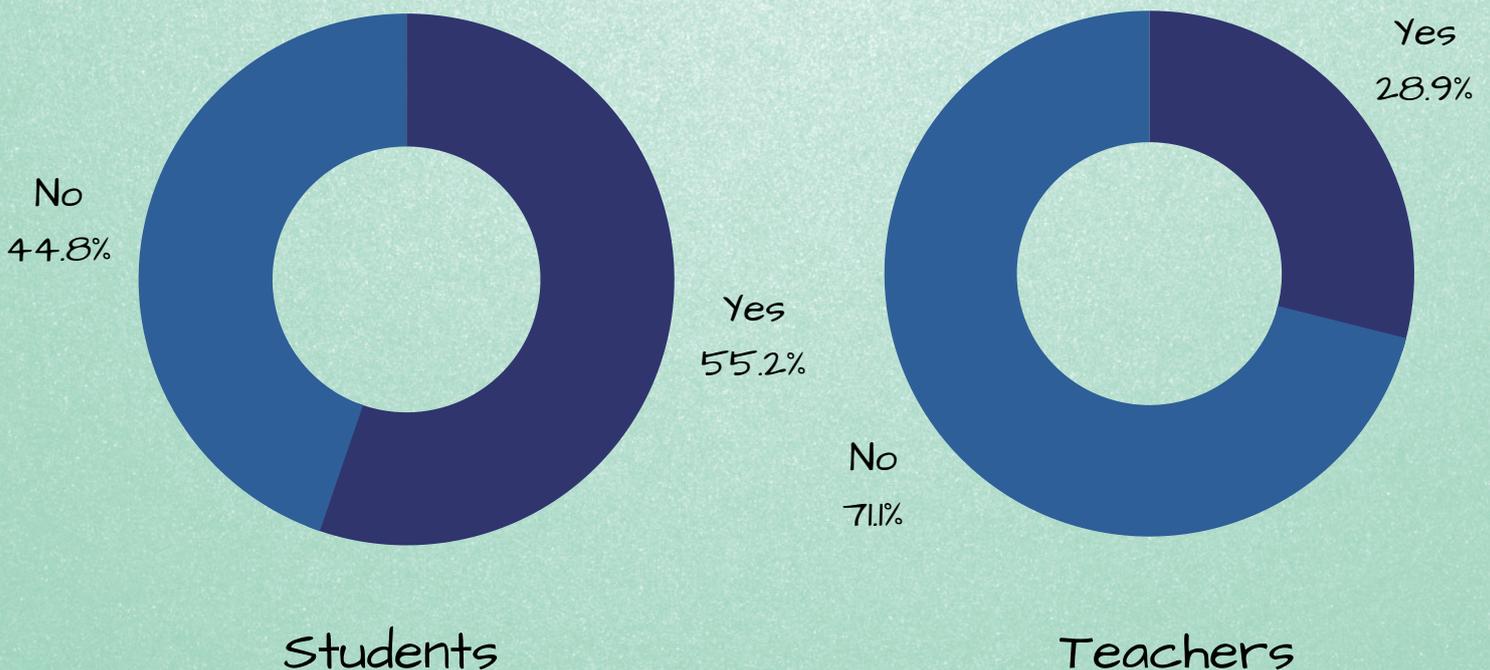
What kind of music do you listen to most?



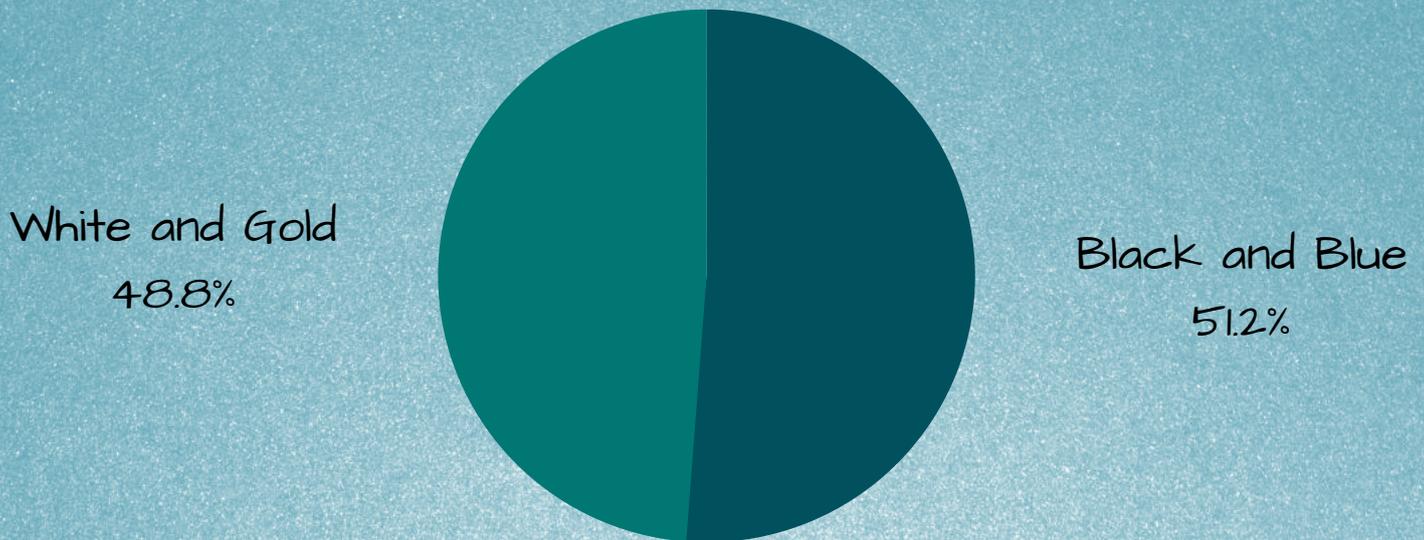
Would You Rather Speak All Human Languages or Talk With Animals?



Do you think the school should encourage competitive sports more than it does?



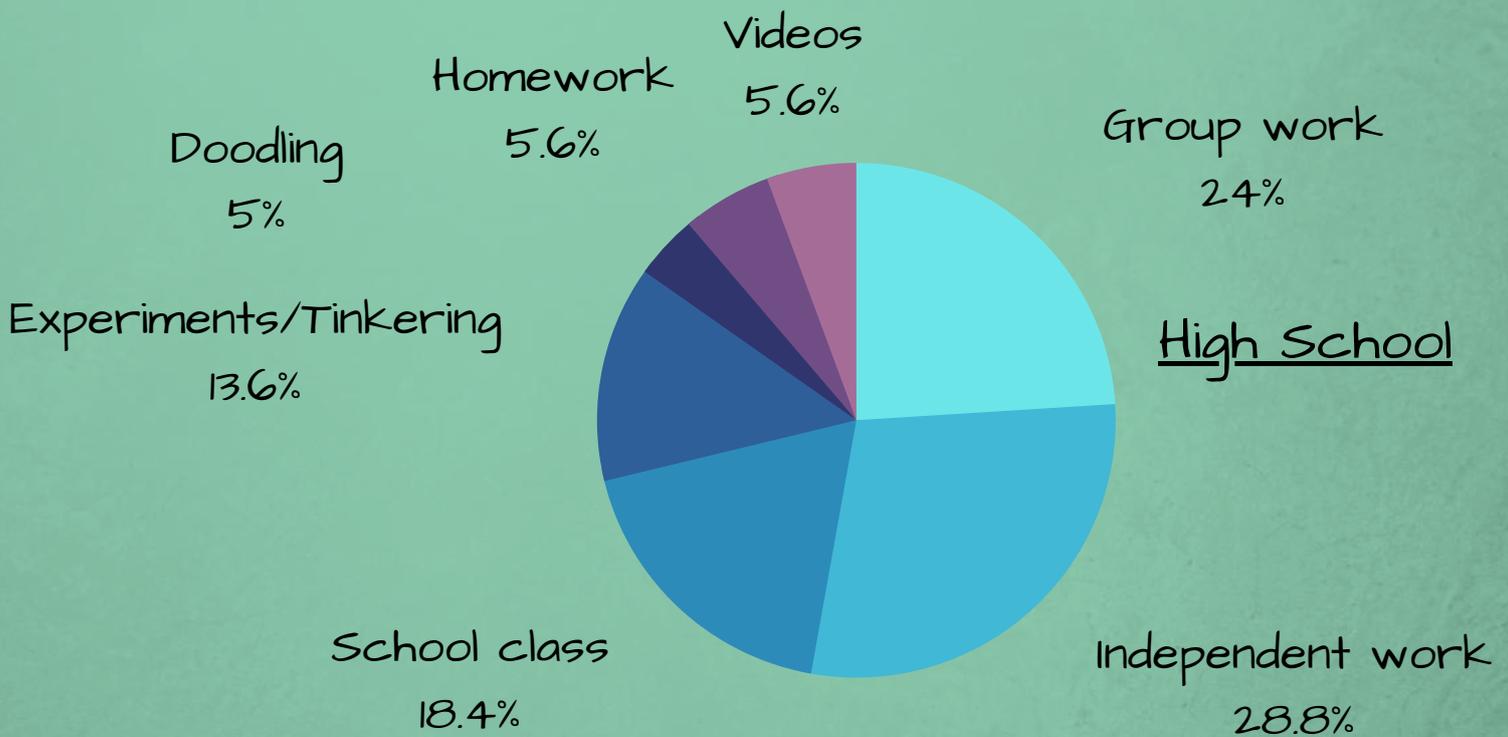
Which two colours do you see in the dress?
(Check this out: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_dress)



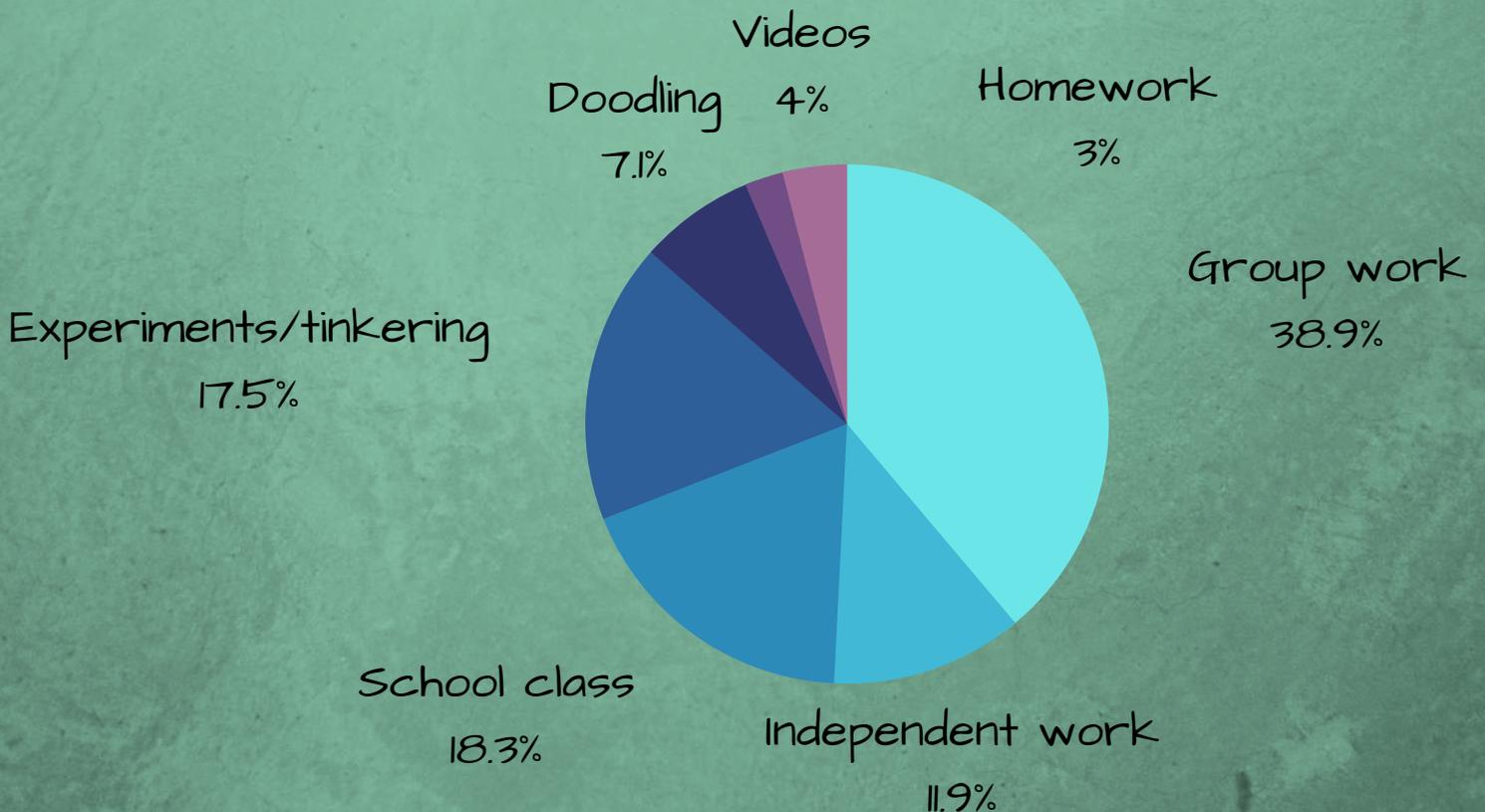
Here's one explanation for the different perceptions of colour of the dress:

"Human beings evolved to see in daylight, but daylight changes colour. That chromatic axis varies from the pinkish red of dawn, up through the blue-white of noontime, and then back down to reddish twilight. Our visual system is looking at the dress and is trying to discount the chromatic bias of the daylight axis. People either discount the blue side, in which case they end up seeing white and gold, or discount the gold side, in which case they end up with blue and black."

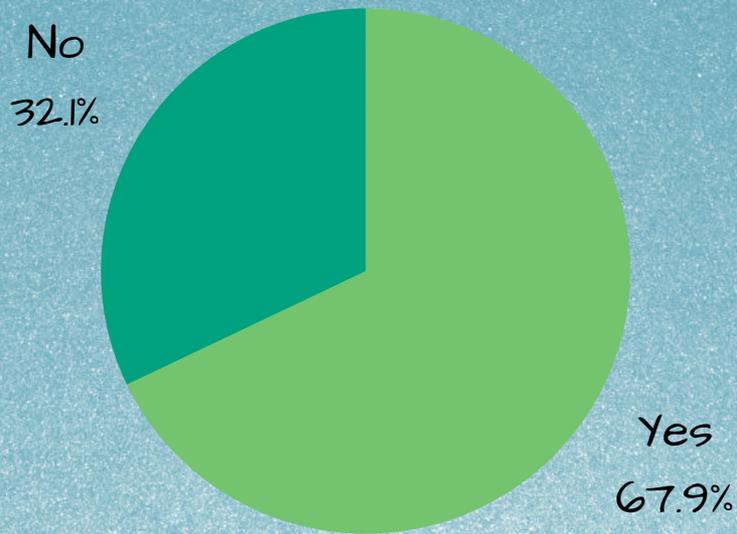
What helps you learn the best?



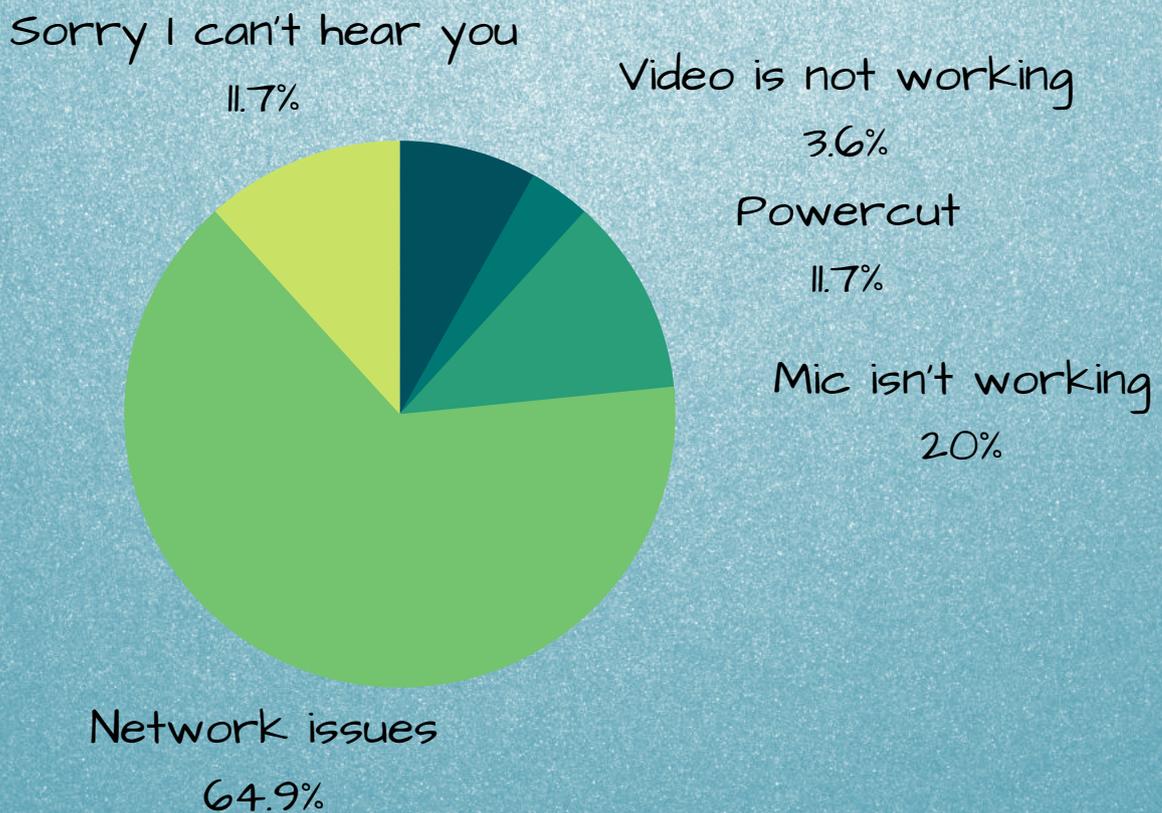
Junior and Middle school



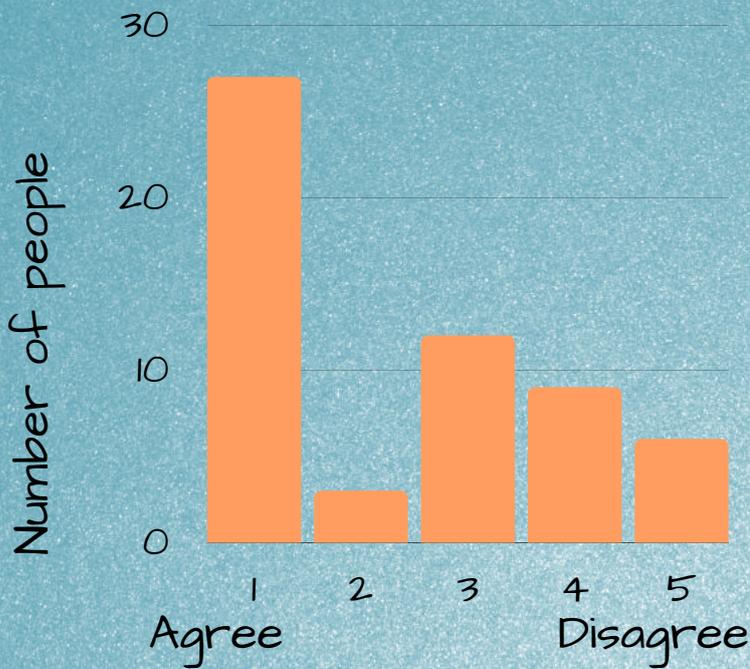
Are you considering pursuing your higher studies abroad?



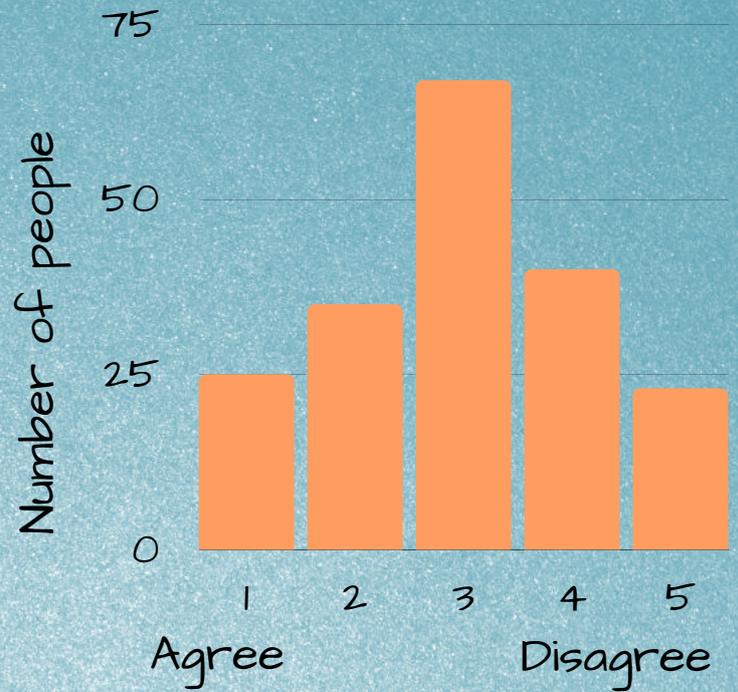
The excuse that you have used most in online classes.



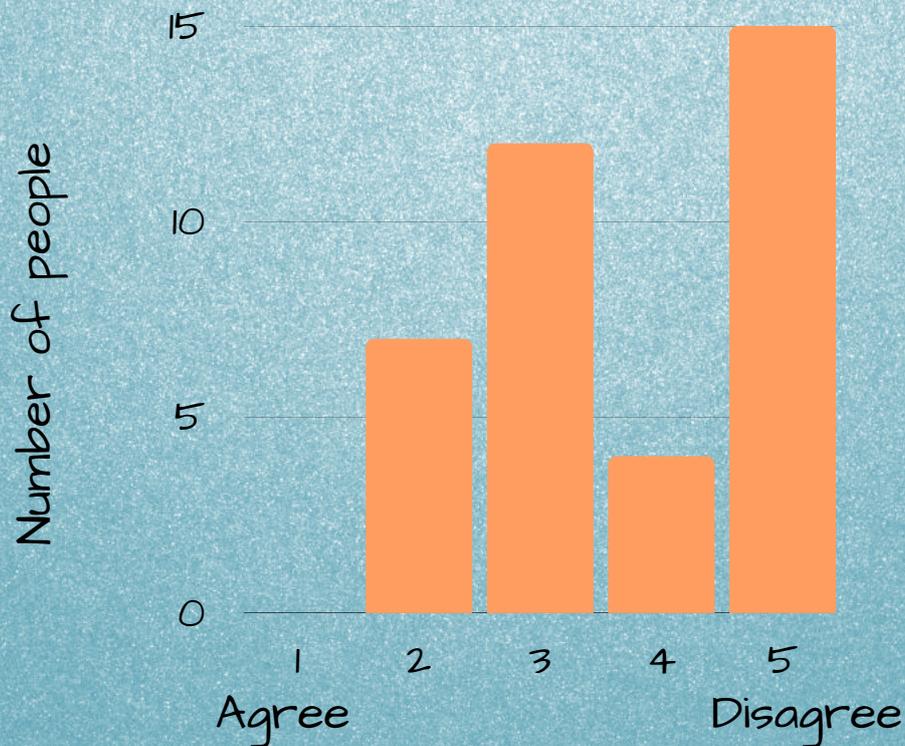
Success is the most important thing in life (scale of 1-5)



Junior school

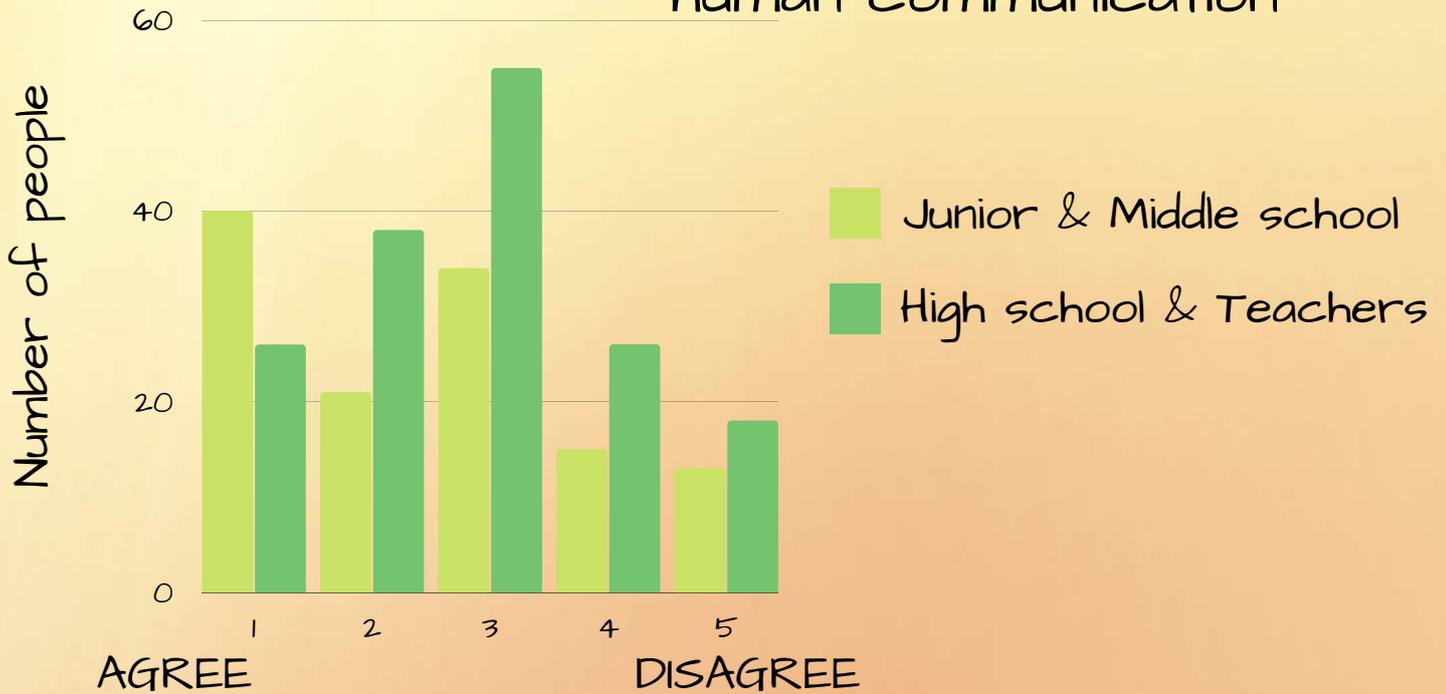


Middle and High School

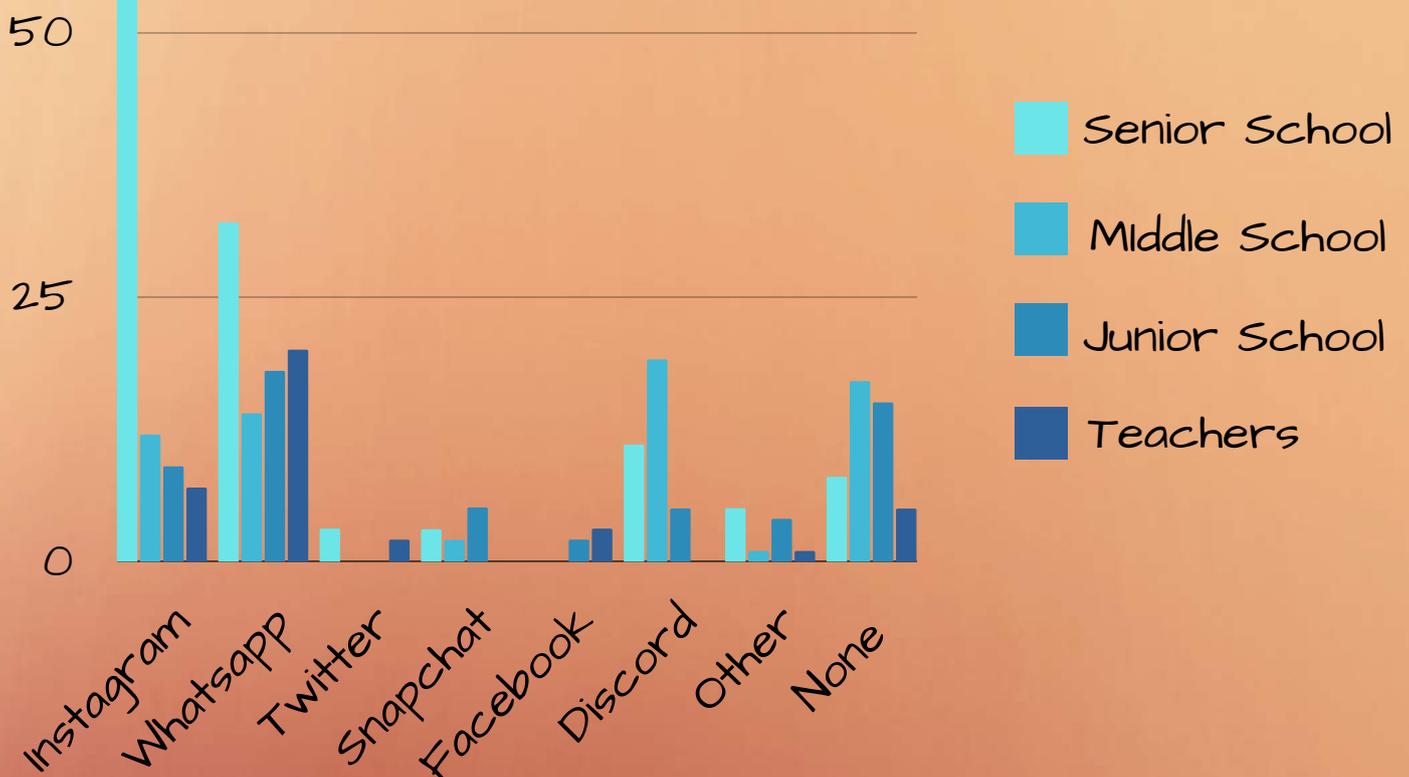


Teachers

Social media has improved human communication



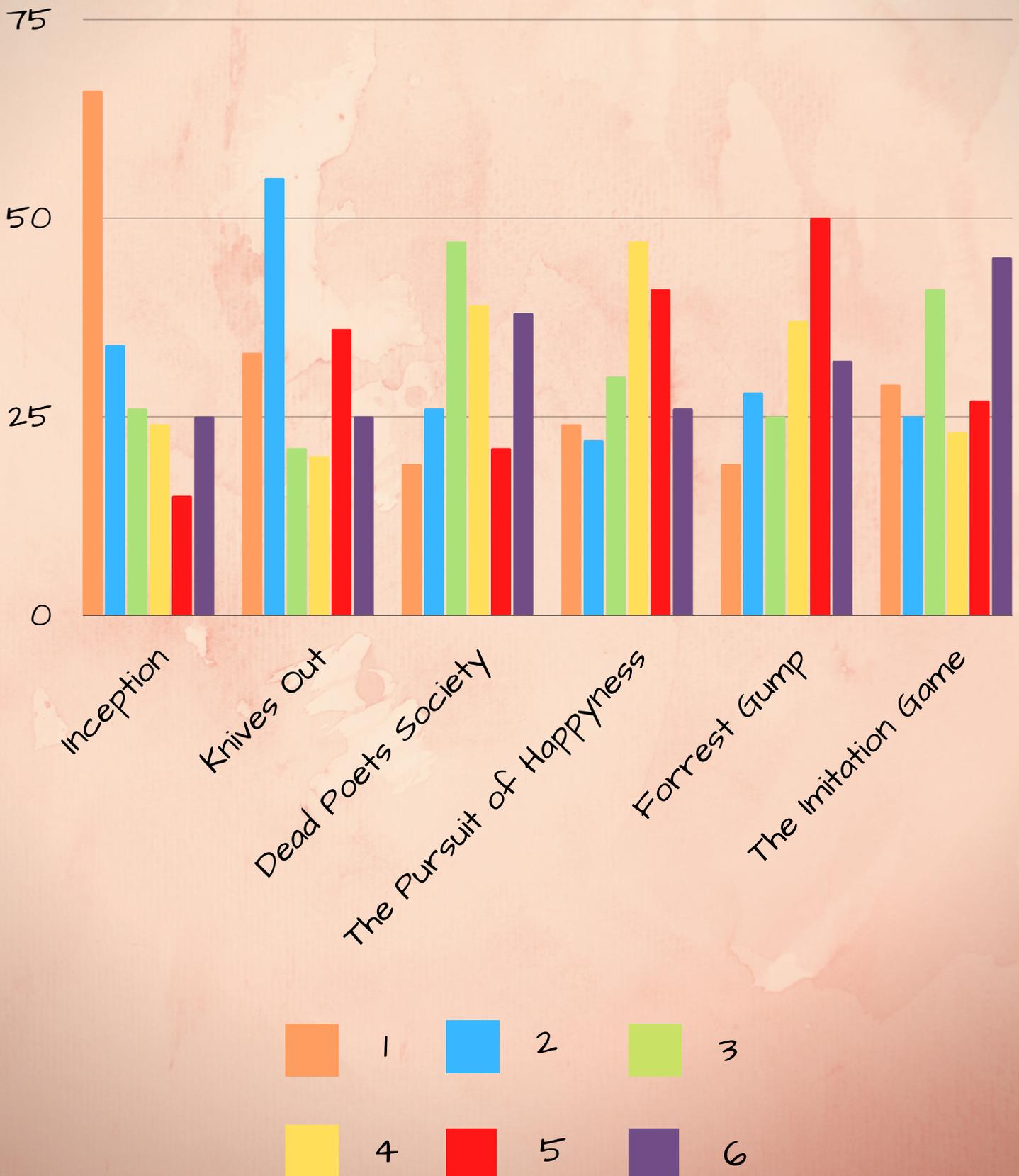
Which social media platform do you prefer?



Favourite movies ranked

(Scale of 1-6: high to low)

(We know its hard to read so we've added some of our observations overleaf).



Total number of 1s and 2s

Inception - 100

Knives Out - 88

The Imitation Game - 54

Forrest Gump - 47

Pursuit of Happyness - 46

Dead Poets Society - 45

Total number of 5s and 6s

Inception - 40

Knives Out - 61

Dead Poets Society - 59

Pursuit of Happyness - 67

Forrest Gump - 82

The Imitation Game - 72

Average Rank

Inception - 3

Knives Out - 3

Dead Poets Society - 4

Pursuit of Happyness - 4

Forrest Gump - 4

The Imitation Game - 4

3:43 A.M.

I'm far beyond the grasp of dreams now.

Between what is tangible and what isn't.

Between the light and the dark

The gentle croon of early winter is still

to reach my ears,

As I lie awake, clawing at the remains of a concept.

Shielded from the world under blankets

Safe from words that make sense, but exposed

To thoughts that don't.

Like walking into an empty room

As the music echoes on outside
and you can hardly make them out.

You could scream but no one would notice your voice.

I know it's just a luminal space.

Temporary,

For the birds will sing

And the world will rise

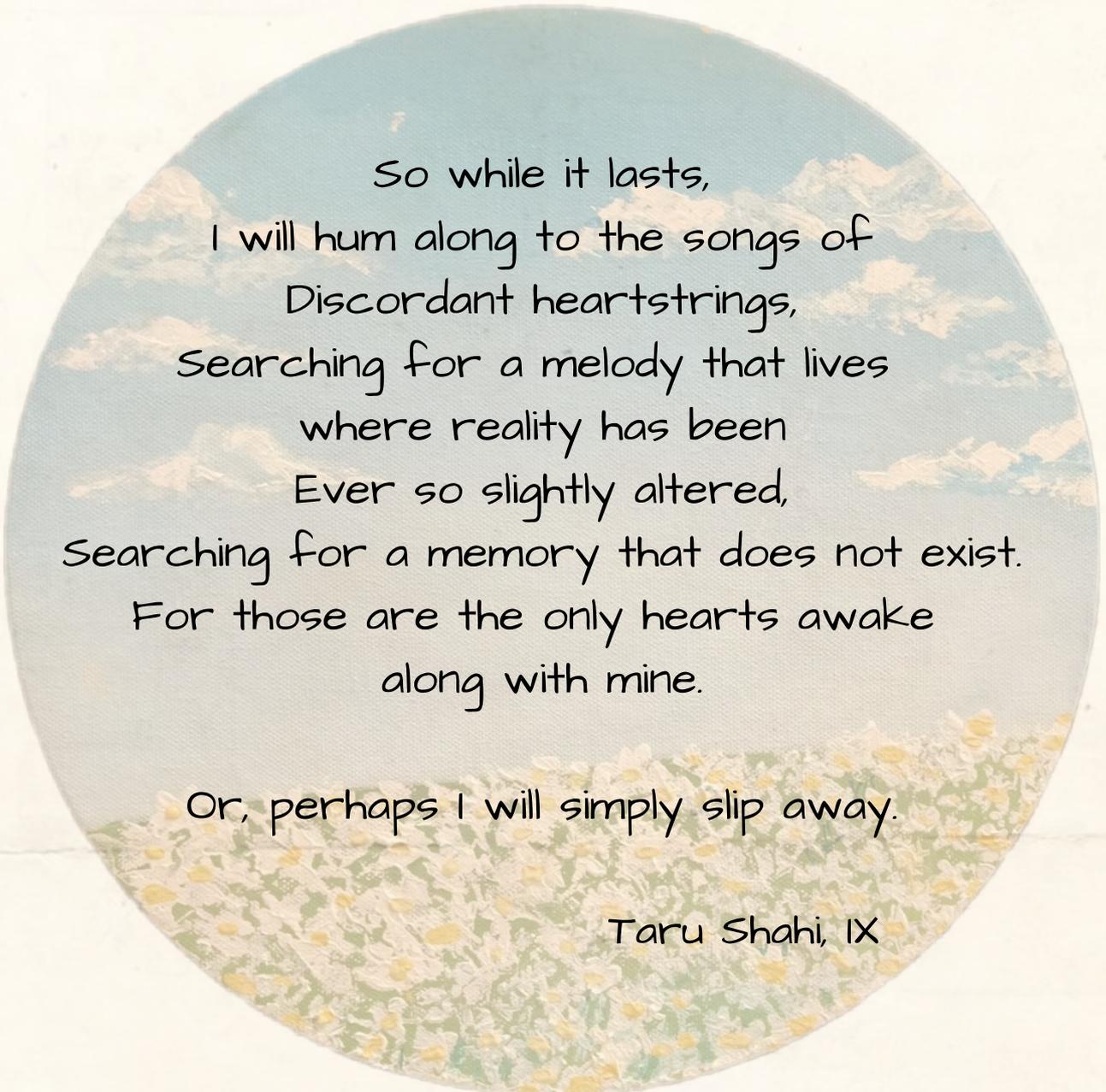
The sun will awaken

And the people will too.

I don't like thinking about that.

I'm not sure it feels alright.

However, I know I like the almost silence.



So while it lasts,
I will hum along to the songs of
Discordant heartstrings,
Searching for a melody that lives
where reality has been
Ever so slightly altered,
Searching for a memory that does not exist.
For those are the only hearts awake
along with mine.

Or, perhaps I will simply slip away.

Taru Shahi, IX

"It was only when I was actively passive, and content to wait and watch, that I really knew what I wanted."

Marion Milner

Hands on the field

We finally saw the long-awaited mustard and the first thing we planted - the methi - grow. From a random night of asking Reena Akka, to the hard work of digging into the rough soil, or meeting Dada Bhau (a local natural farmer, who warned us that this has to be something we dedicate ourselves to and work hard for regularly), to the time when we saw our first plant sprout.



While sprinkling the mustard seeds we were talking about DDLJ* and the fields of mustard we see in the film. After months, when it finally started looking like a field, we felt something simple but powerful. It was happiness. It wasn't the feeling of pride that we had grown it. We felt happy to turn that barren land into a place where multiple varieties of crops and flowers grow.

We had to go farming after every class. There were times when we did not feel like going, but that was okay because the rest of the time we just wanted to stay on the field for as long as we could. It was hard to stay so dedicated to something we had just started. Once we went there though, we didn't feel like going out. It was our safe space. This was barren land that we wanted to turn into something green and beautiful.

The whole experience was new. We learnt how to make so many things, like jeevamrut and how to plant specific seeds in different ways. A germ of an idea can just remain a wish if not acted upon. And we were glad we'd acted upon our germ of an idea!

* Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge

Ami Shyam, X

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."

Rachel Carson

Brothers in Arms

Unlike the first day of the Sports Fest which began with much excitement, on the second day we awoke with tired heads and aching limbs. We put on our shoes that were now caked with dirt, ready to brave another day of intense physical exertion. Though we were prepared for the day's challenges we had resigned ourselves to recreating the previous day with lesser enthusiasm, the toll of the previous day's activities now quite evident. Little did we know that it would turn out to be a day unlike any other. A day of spontaneity and camaraderie.

As the time for the 400-metre dash grew near, we learned that only three of the students would be competing Kumar, Abhigyan and I. Weary from all the other events we had already participated in, Kumar and I promptly backed out, leaving Abhigyan as the sole competitor, which in turn led to the race being unofficially cancelled. It was at that moment, as I was conversing with Kumar that I half-jokingly blurted out a random thought that was running through my mind. I suggested that since the race was to be cancelled why not just run a victory lap with some of our fellow dorm mates. I thought the idea was crazy enough not to merit an actual reply, but the thought seemed to light a spark in Kumar, evidenced by the faint twinkle in his eyes. It was in that moment of playful conversation that the idea for the race was conceived.



Together we began rounding up a few of the other boys from Chinar and we all signed up for the race. So there we stood at the starting line, the six of us, Kumar, Mundada, Prathmesh, Abhigyan, Dhruv and I. For the first lap we all ran at our own paces, mindful of the fact that none of us should get too far ahead of the others. Then began the second lap, all of us running together, our arms intertwined with each other, a physical manifestation of the unbreakable bond that had formed in the dorm over the past year, finishing as we had started, together.

*Ashwin Nambiar, XII
(with a lot of the detail coming
from Abhigyan and Dhruv.
Special credits to Dire Straits, for the title!)*

Interview with Ananya Nannapaneni

(Class XII, 2020-21)

Interviewer: Can you introduce the play “Witness for the Prosecution” for those who did not see the performance in September 2019?

Ananya: “Witness for the Prosecution” is a courtroom mystery by Agatha Christie, and the reason why it's interesting is because she changed the ending twice. We did the second ending. The first ending is where the criminal, even though he was guilty, got away scot-free. And she didn't like that, so a few years later she went back and rewrote it. And that's the version we performed.

It's about this old woman and her murder and someone convicted for it, and essentially it's a lot of deception where there's a constant confusion about who the murderer was. And there is the seemingly cold-blooded wife of the murderer who's supposed to be the chief witness for the defense, but ends up becoming the witness for the prosecution. And so what happens through that, and the mysteries that get revealed in later acts, is what happens in the play.

We took almost a month to decide which play we would do. Everyone wanted to do Sherlock Holmes, and then there was ‘A Doll’s House,’ but literature students were doing that later. So, yeah, that was a big process. We came in, and that was the first activity we did as a batch. That was very interesting, because I think they were around 13 freshers, which was more freshers than oldies. So we were all pretty tense around each other.

Interviewer: When and how did you discover your passion for theatre? What is it that makes acting so special for you?

Ananya: So, I didn't really discover it, I was kind of just thrust into it. Like a lot of us are, I guess. We had class plays as a kid. And I think one of the first

roles I remember doing was Little Red Riding Hood in second grade. That was my first production where we made sets. And all I was excited about was the fact that we got to make costumes and we had a set, and we had makeup and all of that. It was a big novelty back then. And yeah, so that's how theatre started, I think, that's my first memory of it. But I was always into drama, and I would enact scenes from movies and TV serials.

Whenever my mom came back home I would take her chunni and parade around the house and act a bit. Those are my earliest memories with a semblance of theatre. But, after that I think I ended up doing more and more school plays and skits. And unfortunately, I went to a lot of schools before Sahyadri, and none of them had anything like a theatre culture. I know it's not very vibrant even here, but it's still a lot more than what I was used to in other schools.

So, the city I come from, Visakhapatnam, is also a very small city, and we didn't have full-time theatre workshops. It was only for the summer, and so a month or two would be how long I would do some formal training in theatre. And even then, it wasn't very formal, because summer workshops are just meant to be for fun, and all age groups come, and it's not that serious. I do remember always being interested in theatre. I would recite dramatic monologues all the time, and that's how it started. It was one of the only things I picked up naturally. And also, I danced a lot as a kid, and then I left dance, but in dance as well there was a lot of emphasis on expression. Dance and drama are very connected, so that also aided me.

Interviewer: Which aspects of your work in “Witness for the Prosecution” did you enjoy the most?

Ananya: I was just very taken by the scale at which it was done. Like I said before, I'd never done anything at that scale. We didn't have auditions and stuff like that in my previous schools. So that's what really intrigued me in the beginning, that batches do this, and they actually take more than a week's practice into putting up a play. That in itself was very shocking to me when I came here.

And I think the fact that I got to interact so much with my batchmates because there was this allocated time for practice, and I had scenes with a lot of people, and so as a result I ended up speaking to a lot of people. Even to Amresh sir, I started speaking because of the play.

I really enjoyed late night practices, and the fact that we'd just sit and train each other, and watch other people do it. Even the slightest things - we would pick places where certain coughs seemed unnatural, or hand movements looked unnatural - to that degree. And it was a lot of fun to see how other people acted. It was such a wide cast, and we had so many roles, perfecting each role with people and working with them was a lot of fun! I think that was the aspect I enjoyed the most.

Interviewer: What would you say were some of the main challenges for you in performing the roles of Romaine Heilger and Christine Vole? Did you learn anything at a personal level through the process?

Ananya: The two roles in themselves were very contrasting. The most emotional scene for Romaine is where she starts crying on the stand. There's the letter read and within seconds she has to shift expression and I couldn't cry, because it was like one second I had to be really angry and the next second I had to cry. And I remember, the first few practices I just kept pinching myself like 'ok, start crying at this point,' and I just couldn't cry! So that was the hardest, because within a span of a few minutes I had to shift from one character to the other and then within the other character also there was a lot of contrast in the moods that were played. I remember I used to laugh a lot during practices. And the only thing I remember very clearly is pretty much everyone in my batch and Amresh sir and Upasana akka telling me to stop laughing because it was a murder trial, and I'd just keep laughing. So that was a challenge: stop laughing. And not trip.

And also we watched this movie a couple of times, Witness for the Prosecution, and the actress in that was phenomenal. For the longest time,

I would try to mimic her, the way she said her dialogues, and that became a problem because I tried so hard to emulate her performance. It didn't work because it's very different in a movie and when you're performing it; because your voice needs to be louder, you can't necessarily always get the tone right with that volume. Trying to suppress the unconscious instinct to mimic someone else's performance was in itself a challenge for me. And also learning to decide for myself how I wanted certain lines to sound. I was very confused, because as you know, there are a lot of court scenes in the play, and those tend to get very boring, they get very heavy on the audience because of the information being passed around.

And my character for the most part, Romaine, had to be cold and very elegant, but she didn't speak much, and didn't reveal much through her antics, and so my voice couldn't be animated. I had to sound a little deadpan, for most of the play, and how was I supposed to keep that part of the character intact while also captivating the audience because all my lines can't sound the same, right? When it's a film scene, there's rotation, and there's multiple other things, but in the play it just sounded really off, especially when all the other characters were very animated. So, figuring out how to say certain lines, and stopping myself from trying to mimic other people's performances was my biggest challenge.

There was a second part of the question - what did I personally learn? More from the role than the whole play and the experience itself, what I learnt was the experience that solidified the fact that I do want to pursue theatre later and that it was something that I was really interested in. Because it is a very long commitment, giving so many hours to that activity and it's not something I got tired of, which is unusual for me, like spending so much time on something. There are very few activities like that, about which I didn't get worked up about.

I genuinely enjoyed it so much! I realized that I want to do more full-scale productions like that. And because I'd never done one like this before, this experience showed me that aspect of myself.

Interviewer: What, according to you, were the highlights of the final production of the play in school and what do you think could have gone better?

Ananya: I think Siddha's role was the highlight of the play because one, nobody expected it. We kept her hidden for most of the play. And I remember even in our dorm when our seniors asked if she was doing anything, we had this whole drama - oh, she got kicked out because she was doing something. And so nobody knew that Siddha was performing at all. So, yeah, that was a burst of energy when she comes into the scene and she plays this other woman who's completely smitten with Vole. And I think he twirls her around or something, and it's suddenly a shock because Romaine spent practically an hour trying to save Vole. I mean, you see her putting in so much effort and that whole emotional confrontation, and suddenly it's like this. What *is* going on?! So that I feel is a big highlight. I also think the acting was quite good, but Siddha's role, the element of surprise, is the main highlight.

Oh, and what could have gone better? I remember asking some of my dormmates what they felt could have been done better, and Prapthi was like we could have gotten better wigs from Pune. But aside from that, I think we were quite disappointed when we saw the recording of the play, and the fact that the camera wasn't great. We could understand because we had rehearsed the lines so many times, but most external people couldn't understand what was going on because of the bad audio quality. Maybe that could have been better.

Interviewer: You said you enjoyed working with others in this play. How did performing this play affect your ability to work with others and did it affect the relationships within your batch?

Ananya: Yeah, I think that was the biggest thing about this play, that by the end of it our batch had become really close. And right after the play, the trip

to Kutch probably wouldn't have been as much fun if we hadn't done the play, because our batch had bonded so much because of the play. Especially in the last three weeks, we practically spent every other hour when we weren't in class together. And people who normally wouldn't talk to each other or weren't in the same dorm, ended up meeting and spending so much time figuring out this thing and working towards a common goal. So that's what I really loved about the play. I remember once some people had a maths test and there were people doing math and then getting to their scenes. So there were some people discussing theatre and some people discussing maths, and it felt like there was this whole community that had formed. For two and a half hours we would sit at night in the Senior Audi or the Bamboo Hut and I think those practices were really good.

I think I was very tense about coming to a boarding school and meeting so many new people, and this play was when I actually formed friendships in Sahyadri outside of my dorm. I mean, they got deeper with the play, and I'd say I definitely got more comfortable with the batch because of the play.

Interviewer: Do you think you'll pursue theatre in your academic and professional work in college and maybe even after that?

Ananya: I do think so. I don't know about career wise, because it's competitive, but I plan to do it, at least part time. Street theatre really interests me, and there's always groups of people, meeting up outside of work in clubs and stuff, in different cities. And I think that's something I'd always do, even if theatre isn't a big part of what I do primarily. I hope it is, but I'm not sure it will be. And I've also been thinking about how I would like to incorporate environmental studies in theatre, because I think that theatre and activism also go really well together. And yeah, that's definitely something I want to continue; even for college, I was looking at campuses which have an active theatre culture in them.

Interviewer: When people try to portray another character, sometimes they find it hard to step out of themselves. Did you have any trouble becoming your characters? How difficult, or easy, was it to become Romaine Heilger and Christine Vole?

Ananya: I feel like both the characters were very different from me, as a person. Especially Romaine, she's so different; like, she speaks so little, she's always poised, and that's not how I am. I'm always clumsy and falling. So, it was a huge shift. I think when I was practicing in my room, it was probably harder, but when the scene is set and there are other people also doing their part, I think that makes it easier because the atmosphere is created, and somehow within practices I didn't find it as hard to shift into character but when I was alone and practicing by myself I could see that some practices were very dry and I was literally just trying to remember lines at that point. I didn't imbibe any character into it. And I remember talking to Abhigyan, I think, and he talked a lot about getting immersed into Vole, and I could see that clearly in him. And Prathmesh, and everyone, even when Mahi plays Janet, it was so good. Even Puja as Meyers was amazing.

I loved the performances, but personally I didn't focus as much on getting into character. That wasn't a very big concern when I started off. I just went along with the play, and I only wanted to remember the dialogues initially. But I think that the whole reason why I liked theatre so much and prefer it over film is: one, because I don't know so much about films and how it works behind the scenes and second, because I think you feed off each others' energies, and even with the audience there is this temporary relationship that is formed, right? And that's why it's so special, because you're watching it live, and you're feeling or expressing a certain mood together and there is that shift, when you're watching with other people versus when you're watching it alone.

Similarly, when I was acting, I felt like I connected with the energy that was

passed around among my other co-actors, so that really helped. I'm not sure if I paid that much attention to how deeply I got immersed into my character. I didn't give it as much importance, but I probably should have. I didn't consciously think about it is what I mean.

Oh, and also, I know this isn't answering this question, but there was another highlight. It wouldn't be as obvious to the audience, but because it was a courtroom drama, it was initially very, very tedious; it went on for far too long, and I don't think the play would have been half as good as it was if we'd gone along with that script. So I think that our directors Tanmaya and Vedika, Upasana akka and Amresh sir worked very hard on changing the script and they incorporated dialogues from the movie, and then some of their own dialogues, and then used parts from the original script. And that was a lot of work, but I think that really changed everything. I remember we learnt our lines from the first script and then we shifted to another script and that was so much better, and there was also comic relief in that. And I think that was definitely a turning point and a highlight, the fact that we changed the script.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Ananya: This play meant so much to me. Not just because of the relationships that I formed, but also my relationship with theatre. Like I said before, after this play is when I realized that I actually wanted to continue doing theatre. And I feel like that was a milestone, picking up something I was genuinely interested in. Finding interests that really stick with me matters a lot and I think this play gave me the confidence that I wanted to go along with theatre and try different roles. And that's something that I'm very interested in.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for doing this interview with us.

Interviewers: Jahnvi K. & Mahi M., IX

[Link to video](#)

Interview with Abhigyan & Prathmesh (Class XII, 2020-21)

Interviewer: Prathmesh, tell us about the audition through which you landed the role of Wilfrid Robarts. Did you expect to be selected?

Prathmesh: “Witness for the Prosecution” was a play of a kind that I had never done before - anything of that scale or that magnitude. I've done plays before, but this was something else.

When I first went through the script and found Sir Wilfrid, I almost immediately knew that this is the character I wanted to play, if at all I was going to be a part of this play. Then the auditions were announced and we had some two or three days to prep for the auditions. My first day in the audition was not good because earlier I'd never given auditions for plays; I was directly selected. But here you had to give an audition; so it didn't go well. Later at night, I came back to the dorm and I thought to myself that if I got a chance at all the next day, I just had to grab it. That's just what happened the next day. I was unsure on the first night if I would be selected or not, but on the second day, after the audition was done, I was almost certain that I would land the role.

Interviewer: Abhigyan, do you have to share some qualities and characteristics with a character to be able to play the role well?

Abhigyan: For me personally, I have played a lot of roles, so it's more about giving the character time than actually sharing the qualities. The character shapes you, you can't shape the character. So you need not share characteristics with the role that you're playing.

Interviewer: The next question is for both of you. What would you say were the main challenges you faced in mastering the roles of Leonard Vole and

Wilfrid Roberts? Did you learn anything at a personal level through the process?

Prathmesh: Personally, for me, you can find characters of age groups that you can see in your everyday life easier to relate to, but a character like Sir Wilfrid seemed a little too far off, because he was a man in his late 60s or 70s, and a man of that nature you don't really encounter in your day to day life. So there was no inspiration to draw that character out from your surroundings. So for me, imagining that character and making the character traits of that character was quite difficult. And, I think, Amresh sir played a pivotal role in that because he would impersonate Wilfrid's character to me, and he'd sit with me for long hours and do what Wilfrid would be doing. So we'd talk about how Wilfrid would react in a particular situation and how he would be thinking about certain things, and I think that really helped. And on a personal level I learned that, given time, any complex character can be digested and performed.

Abhigyan: Earlier I used to do not so subtle characters. They used to be open in their emotions and rather explicit. But Leonard Vole was a character who's very sly, and it was rather hard to manage being so subtle. The character had almost no movement - no body movements. He hardly had any emotions through most of the play, except when he had his exasperations. Otherwise, he really didn't show any emotion. So to have that kind of plain, simple voice but also a manipulative and calming voice, that was the toughest part of the character.

Interviewer: This question is, again, to the both of you. What, according to you, were the highlights of the final production of the play in school? What could have gone better?

Prathmesh: In terms of acting, we'd spent quite a lot of time, almost around one and a half months, so I don't think more time would have really

helped enhance our acting. But something was missing. I mean, I can't really put a finger on what it was exactly, but even in terms of the backdrop and the whole setting, the play did not come alive because there was no backdrop and there was no change of sets as such, and the setting really matters in a play.

And I think we could improve a little bit on those small things, like maybe the sound system, or give collar mics to the protagonists. Those things could have been better. But on the whole, I'd say the last scene of the play was really nice, because not really many people expected it to turn out like that in the end, but it did.

Abhigyan: Well, I differ from Prathmesh in that respect. Of course, the set helps, the setting and the ambience and all of that helps a lot with the mood of the play and how the audience receives it. But there was something missing in the acting as well. In the way that it didn't feel as if the characters were inside you, inside all of us. So I think about five more days or 10 more days with rigorous rehearsals of the whole play would have helped quite a lot.

Interviewer: What about a highlight?

Prathmesh: It was the last scene, though I'm not sure if the audience recalls it. The last scene, where Vole really comes and lays it out that he's deceived Wilfrid and Romaine. So in that scene, I had to give a particular reaction and I used to overdo it, and that had never come out in any rehearsal. And then we were like, let's just leave it and brush over it. But from the feedback that I received after the play and what I felt during the play, I think that scene just came out very well while we were there.

Interviewer: How did performing this play affect your ability to work with others? Did this play affect the relationships within your batch?

Prathmesh: In our batch, 15 of us were freshers and 13 were oldies; so it was kind of an ice-breaking thing where the entire batch came together and did something or the other, because in the entirety of the production, everybody had some role to play. If it was not directly involved with acting, it was something like costume or backstage. So a lot of us really got a chance to interact with others.

And then because it was over one and a half months, the actors and everyone else became like a group; it was nice, the kind of conversations we had with people talking about their experiences with acting. Although some of them were acting for the first time, they seemed like complete naturals in their roles. So I think, it was an ice-breaking session for our batch as a whole, and it did foster relationships.

Interviewer: What do you think, Abhigyan, since you were one of the few oldies in your batch and there were a lot of freshers that joined? Did it help you bond with them?

Abhigyan: I didn't think about that aspect till you asked the question, actually. Yeah, it was fun as a play and, of course, working in groups and working in teams does foster your ability to navigate around everybody. That certainly happened. In terms of relationships, I do not know what the effect really was. But for the batch I could see that happening, because there were so many freshers that were mingling because of the play.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts and feelings soon after the play had been staged?

Abhigyan: First I thought, "Oh, finally it's over." I was slightly disoriented. I thought there could have been something more in the play. There was a slight disappointment that the play wasn't complete. That feeling was

there for one month, actually, that we could have done something better than this. It didn't feel as if it was at a higher level yet.

Prathmesh: In general, it's a nice thing to have class plays like this in eleventh standard, especially because I really feel that it is an ice-breaking thing for a batch as a whole, and it gives you an opportunity to do certain things.

Because in the eleventh standard, you're not that academically pressed or you do not really have other obligations, which you will have when you are in the twelfth standard. And it's nice to be part of a play of a slightly longer duration than other short plays that you would have done earlier in school life. So it's nice to be a part of something like this. And I mean, it was a good mess. It's a lot of hustle, bustle and a lot of people running around here and there, and at some point you'll be like, "I don't even know what's happening," and things like that. So, yeah, it is a mess, but it's a good mess.

Interviewer: There are these typical things about plays, like memorizing dialogues, working together and coming on time for rehearsals. Because it was quite a long play, was it all pretty smooth or was it difficult to learn all the dialogues?

Abhigyan: My dialogues were typically shorter and so, in terms of learning dialogues, I didn't really have much of an issue. I was allowed to change certain lines here and there to suit myself. I remember, for the first three or four weeks, nobody was prepared for their role and there was a lot of frustration about that. Everybody used to come late and then some people didn't turn up. Some people wouldn't have even read the script once. I remember the deadline was also very tentative all the time; we kept shifting it. Yeah, so that kind of mess was there.

Prathmesh: My dialogues in particular were quite long, and I had not

gotten a hold of the character. An actor gets the liberty to change dialogues, add his lines and improvise on the character when he has a hold of the character. But in my case, the character was holding me, in a way, not the other way around, which it should have been. So I had to really learn all the lines, because if I changed two, three words here or there that would not give the effect that Wilfrid was supposed to have. So, yeah, I was a little hard pressed, but I managed in the end.

Interviewer: I think everyone who watched it really liked the play. You all did it really well, and at some point I think everyone forgot you were acting.

Abhigyan: It's been one and a half years but, on the whole, you remember these things, right? These class plays, especially.

Interviewer: Thanks a lot for agreeing to do this interview with us.

Interviewers: Mahi M. & Jahnavi K., IX

[Link to video](#)

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts..."

Shakespeare

Matrimonial Ad!

To briefly let the huge, wide world know,
What I want in my forevermore,
Since my brown parents have put up a show,
And I'm not allowed to let it go.

I'd like a man who adores animals,
Since to me, those seem kind and amiable.
Probably a tall chef whom I could admire,
And for whom I could make good food whenever.

Someone who's honest and witty,
So I'd believe him in a jiffy,
And not worry about his lame-joke genes passing on,
Just someone for whom I could sing a song.

He need not earn as much as Elon Musk,
But enough to buy a couple of sarees is a must.
Perhaps someone who is an activist,
Someone I could go and protest with.

He must be open-minded and fun,
For if he loves the Congress -- I'm done.
Someone with a good sense of fashion,
One who has only good intentions.

These are a few qualities I hope,
That my future *pati* will have.

Prisha Singh, XI



**Sahyadrians
on another
chocolate being
removed from
the tuck shop**

**Meanwhile, Tuck
shop didi:**



Language and Power

An early memory I carry of interacting with the English language is standing in front of the glass shelves at NBT, Delhi and stuttering out titles of books with the colourful illustrations. Achan would buy the ones with the illustrations I liked and I would try to read them at home, most of the words incorrectly pronounced or misunderstood. And seldom occurred those moments, the 'aha' moments - the ones where I read a word correctly and understood what it meant. Interspersed with this comprehension was a moment of power - the kind of power that comes with the realization of knowledge.

Usha didi was pivotal in shaping my learning of language. She was my care-taker, a young 17 year old who waited at the doorstep of the newly painted railway quarter every day, when the cycle rickshaw dropped me. She would serve me food, clean up the house and play all my make-believe games without a trace of exhaustion. It was in these make-believe games that I chanced upon a beautiful reflection of the tool called communication. Usha didi did not know English. She couldn't spell her name in English. In fact, I later learnt that she hadn't studied beyond Grade 3. And I did not know Bengali or Hindi. Yet, we communicated with each other endlessly, her in Hindi and Bengali and me in my broken English and Malayalam. Usha didi spent hours listening to me. She shared folk songs and folklore, doodling and miming, and

I read stories to her from my books, pointing to the pictures and miming. Lying in the incomprehensibility of this exchange was a nuanced moment of power - the kind of power that comes from extending deep compassion, love and patience.

This was a memory that often played out inconspicuously, when I entered my class of 44 boisterous middle-schoolers, coming from intersections of marginalization (religion, caste, gender), learning English as their second language. Being an ardent lover of the language and fuelled with a passion for change-making, I charted out plans and strategies and what-not to empower my students with this additional language. I could plan all I wanted but Likith always had an agenda of his own. Fluent in Hindi, Kannada, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu and other regional dialects, he refused to engage in the English class, out of sheer stubbornness and dislike, and would be wildly disruptive. One month in, he still refused to respond to me or interact with me.

That is until I spoke in Kannada. Once I caught him standing outside the class (he was punished for his misbehaviour) and instinctively I asked, "Yenaythu (what happened)?" His reaction is still etched in my memory as clear as day - a sudden twinkle in his eye, an expression of wonder, and his mouth suppressing a smile. What a moment of breakthrough that was! The entire lunch break, he sat next to me, chattering away, telling me stories of his father's fish shop, bus routes he'd traversed, local politicians and

violent teachers. We spent most lunch breaks together since, chattering, laughing and slowly transitioning to speaking in English and learning the same in the classroom. From the poetics of this educational experience emerged an intimate power - the power of respectful agency, of togetherness and of openness.

I grew up believing that the mastery of a language and its dispersion carries a power that can most closely be summarized in the age-old proverb, 'knowledge is power'. However, retrospectively, as I ponder over these intimate moments of my life so far, I am beginning to uncover a rich tapestry of power, the subjectivity of the moments it lies in and the beauty it positions itself into, in personal and social narratives.

Deepa P. akka

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."

Nelson Mandela

My Experience with Online Classes at my New School

When I first started classes at my new school, in June 2020, I was very confused, since I had not used the computer much before. On the first day, I was very enthusiastic, yet a little worried about this new school. I was a little tense about what my teachers and other kids would think of me. For the first few days of the first term, it was hard for me to get used to the new way of studying.

I had a very different idea about online classes, and how they would be. It took me quite some time to get used to the ways at my new school, and because of that, I would work and write very quickly, without putting any thought into my work at all. I also did the classwork and homework in a very disorganized and messy manner. As I was new to the concept of submitting work online and having it stored in a place on the internet, the assignments and due dates added to my tension and fear of online school.

One day, when I was submitting work, my mom came and saw the work. She asked why my work was so disorganized. I explained my issues to her, and why my work was this way. She said that the thing that mattered more than my submitting work was that I understood everything.

After that, I paid more attention in class and then I realised that not all

the things about online class were bad. As August and my birthday came closer, I found that classes were actually fun, and I gradually started to feel less tense about all my assignments and my work. This resulted in my getting better at my subjects, and as I was able to understand, I did better at my assignments too.

After a few months of staying at home, the days went by very fast, and before I knew it, I was just a few days away from my birthday. On my birthday, I was very lucky, as I found out we were going to Bhopal. I love Bhopal very much; before I had come to live in Noida, my mother and I had lived for three years in Bhopal. I pleaded with my parents to let me miss classes for the time we were in Bhopal.

When we came back from Bhopal, I knew I would have a lot of work to catch up on, so I sat down for some time every day, and completed the work. I must admit that this break had made me lazy, and my parents had to push me to not leave work pending. Alongside all this work, I also found out that some of my classmates and I had common interests, so I decided to talk to some of the kids whose jokes I laughed at.

Over time, as I talked with them and quite a lot of them talked back with me, I found class could be a lot more fun, even if we have just acquaintances and not friends. Finally, by the end of the first term, I could call one or two of them my friends. I started to take more interest in group projects, and found myself enjoying them. After some time came the holidays, and I was really happy that they had arrived. At the start of the holidays, I must admit that I was being very lazy when it came to holiday homework. So in the end, while we were in the

mountains for the last few days of vacation, I had to do my work in a hurry, but surprisingly, since I had thankfully done the creative writing work for English, it was easy to maintain a nature diary in the mountains.

After the winter break, I became very lazy about classwork and did not concentrate as much as I used to, for some time. But one day I realised that what I was doing was not good, so I became more attentive in class. After winter break, time flew by and I did not notice the second term coming to its middle. Then, one day, I found out from Reena Akka, my class teacher, that there were some English assignments that I had not done, so I sat down to check and found out that I had not done the grammar unit and was being lazy with it, so I took two or three days and completed my grammar unit, after which things became easy.

Now, coming to the end of the term, I think that even if online classes were not as much fun as real ones, I at least got to learn new things and meet amazing teachers and kids.

Yuana Garg, V

“You can’t teach people everything they need to know. The best you can do is position them where they can find what they need to know when they need to know it.”

Seymour Papert

Where I Am From

*I'm from Akka's Kisses,
from Amma's love and Nanna's hard work*

*I'm from Ammamma's tasty dishes,
from tatagaru's patience and from my naughtiness*

*I'm from Amma's avacy biryani,
from Akka's wonderful creations and from Nanna's care*

*I'm from the fantasy land,
from the gods of Greece
and from the school of Hogwarts*

*I'm from Jotiba Phule's fight for liberty,
from the amazing story of India's independence, and
from The Island of the Blue Dolphins*

*I'm from the heap of amazing books,
from the guidance of my family
and the support I give myself.*

Ishita Pinnamaneni, V

That Unbounded Sense of Familiarity

To be honest, I've never liked talking to other people about Sahyadri. Of course, it could've just been my inability to articulate my thoughts well, or my shyness, but as I moved out of junior school and middle school, I think I began to get in touch with the root of my resistance, which was this deep rooted misbelief that the whole idea of what Sahyadri represented was a little fake and unreal.

I think I've always been particularly suspicious of any ideal, but I think my misbelief emerged so strongly because this was the place I was living in. And because it is the nature of habitual cycles to grow quietly, unnoticed, I didn't even realize it affected my relationship with the school until it slowly morphed into a deep rooted cynicism. I began to think that KFI was just a label, a pretense under which everyone sought reassurance, because the reality was far from the vision.

You may find it odd that I'm talking about this as I take my leave, I know. But I think it's important for me to talk about this because it was in overcoming that personal block of cynicism about school that I entered an important phase of growth, which enabled me to fully come to terms with what Sahyadri was really about and also make a significant inner journey that was both liberating and empowering.

And this journey began with a few instances, when there was a space and the leisure for a thoughtful asking, an intimate inquiry, that compelled me to re-examine my cynicism and make

headway in understanding the complex reality of the school. A kind of kinship, a deeper familiarity with these questions began to grow in me. The way a sitar player grows familiar with a particular raag. Or how a potter grows familiar with the texture of clay. I gradually began to recognize the glaring contradiction between this inherently complex reality of the school and my knee-jerk tendency to capture it through a simple narrative.

I realized that it was only in that state of the deepest familiarity with the asking of questions that I could begin to make any meaningful progress through them. Call it a skill, an art - it's probably the most valuable thing in human life. After grappling with it for a long time, I came to realize that this is where the significance of the school lies. Cultivating the art of asking the right questions and exploring them alongside others who are interested, with the same passion and rigour, but at the same time, the tenderness and patience to let the questions emerge and take their form.

As I look back, I find myself unexpectedly glad for having gone through the journey I did, without a speck of regret or shame. I'm glad because Sahyadri, in its physical and metaphorical form, gave me the unhurried space and time to make sense of my questions, become part of them, and be guided by some of the most compassionate, affectionate teachers and peers. I'm grateful for having become this intimate and familiar with a place, not only because it's comforting to be accustomed to something in the physical sense, but because it created the environment conducive for the asking of questions, and asking them in the right way.

In terms of academics, Sahyadri gave me the flexibility and support I needed to really explore my subjects, so that intellectual growth took on an entirely different meaning, that was broader and richer. I think any words would understate just how lucky I count myself to have been able to pursue the tangents that interested me, be playful and experimental and develop a more dynamic relationship with my subjects. To chart my own academic journey, taking it as far as I wanted. But more than the academic aspect, which has always been extremely meaningful to me, I think I've realised that Sahyadri enabled me to learn things about myself, about my emotions, through this delicate art of questioning, so that when I go out tomorrow, I can understand the world a little better, and also my place in it.

I keep telling myself and others that I'm not attached to this place as such, but I also have to say that being here in this school has shaped me incredibly and I'll truly miss this place more than I'd ever admit. Not in the sentimental way, but because after all these years, I think I'm finally able to appreciate and respect what the school represents. And I think that is, ironically, the most significant aspect of my experience here. So as I move on, entering a different stage of life, I'll carry this souvenir nudged deep in my heart, with the fondness and affection that it truly deserves, and that strange, unbounded sense of familiarity - with the place, and with the asking of questions.

Sunidhi Dhawan, alumna (2019-20)

GHOSTS

When I was younger, I used to believe in ghosts. My father told me that ghosts aren't real. I would try to believe him, but would always end up scared. My father told me that ghosts are just a belief that scares you. At first, that seemed to be true. But then I thought about god. I thought that if ghosts were a belief that means god must be a belief too. But the only difference was that ghosts made me feel scared, and gods made me feel brave.

When I got thirsty at night and had forgotten to fill my empty water bottle, I had to go down the hall to fill it and go back to my bedroom. I used to switch on the lights before I even got the chance to step into the darkness. And when I finished filling the water bottle, I would run back to my bedroom, sometimes forgetting to turn off the lights. When my father realized that all the lights in the house were on, he would come to my room and would tell me to turn off the lights. But I would pretend to be asleep, hoping with my fingers crossed that he wouldn't try to wake me up. Eventually, after failing to wake me up, he would go and turn off the lights. When he came back to check on me, he would notice a smile on my face and realize I had faked sleeping to get him to turn off all the lights. He would scold me for fun and make sure I didn't take it literally, and I knew that he was joking around, but my fear of ghosts wouldn't go away.

Finally, after a couple of years, my fear of ghosts did disappear. It happened when my father told me that if I said a

prayer to Lord Rama, my fear would go away. I tried it out one day hoping it would work, and it did. I was so happy, I made fun of my past self then. I also scolded myself. How could I have been so foolish as to think that ghosts were real?! I was a little ashamed, but mostly happy - happy because my fear of ghosts had gone away.

The fact that my fear of ghosts went away made me feel a little too brave. I would go down the hallway quietly singing or dancing. I couldn't help myself, knowing that my fear of ghosts had disappeared. At that time, I thought it was normal for someone to exaggerate. I thought that every kid in the universe would exaggerate when it came to defeating fear!

One day, recently, I was watching YouTube on the weekend. As I was scrolling down, trying to search for the TikTok video, my eyes spotted a video saying 'scary ghost sighting proves ghosts are real. Well, I confidently clicked on the video, knowing that I wasn't scared of ghosts anymore. But after I had watched that video, I was 100% sure that ghosts were real!

Today, I still believe that ghosts will thrive in old houses, streets, or abandoned places. Since that video, my life has been a disaster! I've developed a new fear of being alone for more than five seconds.

Abhijna Yaramati, VI

बचपन

जो चला गया बचपन मेरा उसे लाऊँ कैसे?

जो बीत गया उसे पाऊँ कैसे?

जो चला गया बचपन मेरा उसे लाऊँ कैसे?

जब लोग तोतली बातों के भाव समझ लेते थे,

बिन कहे ही एहसास समझ लेते थे।

समय है या हवा का रुख कुछ यूँ बदला,

बड़े होकर अब अपनों को समझाऊँ कैसे?

जो चला गया बचपन मेरा उसे लाऊँ कैसे?

दूर को दूल, रोटी को नोती, जरूर को जलूल कहा करता था,

लोग बस यूँ ही समझ लिया करते थे।

मेरी जलूल को भी जरूर मान लिया करते थे,

पर आज मैं अपनी जरूरतें अपनों को समझाऊँ कैसे?

जो चला गया बचपन मेरा उसे लाऊँ कैसे?

छोटी-छोटी सी खुशियों में भी एक चहक होती थी,

हर तरफ प्यार और बस प्यार की महक होती थी।

अब तो जीवन का ये फूल सूखने लगा है, कहो

इन सूखे फूलों में वो महक लाऊँ कैसे?

जो चला गया बचपन मेरा उसे लाऊँ कैसे?

आलोक त्रिपाठी

THE INNER YOU

In the whole of this big, bad, violent world, a whole lot of battles take place. Some between countries, some between communities, some between people, and some within us. Most of us aren't aware of these battles because they are within the confines of the mind. We don't know much about the mind, how to control it, or even gain entry into it. This is because we don't make the effort to know ourselves well and are caught in the web of life. We don't have the time we require for ourselves, for self-assessment.

As we don't really invest in ourselves, we don't have much of an idea about what we really wish to do. All this while, all we do is what society tells us to do. They say - you are born, you go to school, get "educated", pass out, go to college, get a job, get married, settle down, have kids, make money and die. That, my friends, is society's idea of life. So we are actually like living robots. If you don't want to be mechanical, be logical. We need to start thinking, questioning, spending time with ourselves, and investing in the development of our mind. This will help in questioning and thinking about the conflicts that happen within us. The conflicts can be simple questions to ourselves, like "Should I go for a run even though my knee hurts?" Even things that seem unimportant to us can make a great impact on our lives. They can affect our relationships with ourselves because when I lie to myself and say that my knee isn't going to cause me any trouble, in the long run it could get serious.

A lot of conflict goes on within us, and similar conflicts happen in the world on a way larger scale. If we can improve ourselves we will improve the world. Because we make the world. So not only do we need to change ourselves but also help improve and impact society. That's one way the world will change.

Nandan Agrawal, IX

Poem of Questions

The caterpillars that make their cocoons at the right time,
Do they look at the clock?

The monkeys that climb all day,
Do they get tired at all?

Why does the cat meow so much,
When it knows nobody is listening intently?

Does the sand remember
The footprints I had placed on it?

Do the waves remember
The shores they have passed over?

Sohum Kadam, V



P.S. pls don't fire us, Amresh sir!

What Does it Mean to Teach “To Kill a Mockingbird?”

Anyone who begins to read "To Kill a Mockingbird" would quickly recognize that it is a masterpiece. I too have long known this, having read it a few times while teaching it in class 8 over the years.

However, it's only after I went into it hammer and tong this year that I began to come up close to Harper Lee's genius in creating this novel. It's staggering to be confronted at last with her true mastery.

Looking back, I have to confess to feeling a little embarrassed about having given the novel short shrift. I thought I'd understood, but I hadn't, not really. I didn't know then that I was in fact giving it short shrift, and I'm only able to avoid guilt now by blaming the breadth of her genius!

Y'know, it's not easy to overcome what the ancients called avidya, ignorance – not of the ordinary kind when you don't know something, but the other, more elusive one, when you don't know that you don't know. Avidya, in the sense I'm using it here, has a kinship with what is called the Dunning-Kruger effect these days. It's a fashionable name for a cognitive bias. The Dunning–Kruger effect is a cognitive bias in which people with low ability at a task overestimate their ability. It is related to the cognitive bias of illusory superiority and comes from people's inability to recognize their lack of ability.

Anyway, quite accidentally, I ventured into deeper waters this year. I know I'm there in these deep waters, but I'm yet to fathom the depth of these waters. I truly have to tell myself, at this stage, that I don't have a grasp of Harper Lee's genius. Earlier, I thought I was smart and I knew her as an author; now I'm certain that I don't. I keep going back to the text, wandering among its pages, riveted to this or that, perpetually responding, absorbing.

I recall the anguished mood of the late 50s and early 60s, and I marvel at Lee's moral courage in ennobling Tom, a black man falsely accused of rape. I'm moved to admiration by Atticus's compassion and his pragmatism, as much as his humility, and then, by his tenacity in the face of certain failure. My eyes shine (probably) when I see her insights about nurturing, deftly unravelled in the parenting seedbed of Atticus's "courteous detachment" and, of course, through the clever plot device of Scout's eavesdropping. I recognize her nuanced deconstruction of femininity - in the deep south of the US in the 1930s - through Scout's ironic horror of what she sees as feminine hypocrisy, and through her emerging respect for feminine resilience - Aunt Alexandra's. Invariably, on several occasions in the middle of reading to the class, I choke back tears of affection (when Atticus ruffles Jem's hair after the grim encounter with the Old Sarum bunch) or pause to let pass the aching loss of belonging (when Scout tries to console Dill by rationalizing parental neglect, and Dill tells Scout why Boo can never leave because he has nowhere to go).

What do I have to say about teaching "To Kill a Mockingbird"? Not too many enlightening things, except for this story I'm trying to tell you. It's probably true, perhaps at a fundamental level, that you teach what you are, not what you know. If you don't experience awe, passion, sadness and kindness, if you haven't allowed the wellspring of human existence to touch you and transform you, I suppose you can't really be said to be teaching.

Especially, if you're trying to teach literature. If literature is a mirror of life and society, if literature is a repository of wisdom, you have to do the mirroring as well, you have to have had at least the beginning of the taste of that wisdom. Otherwise, how could one teach literature? It's not in the story.

Amresh sir

No Fixities

*A wave of white egrets wings
over the silver rippled river
in a live, shifting crescent,
a dance forever being choreographed.*

*Liquid perception flows:
molecules of seeming cohere
now this way – now that,
motifs made and unmade
in windblown sands,
play of leafy shadows
on the dappled earth
neath the swaying pongamia.*

*The solute
of thought and narrative,
of boundaries and definitions,
dissolves, ever dissolves,
never resolving itself into
the unnatural hardness
of that fixed singularity,
a satisfying conclusion.*

Anjali akka

The Story of the Moon

Mallika Akka

The storyteller lived in a tree in the woods. She looked like a morepork owl but inside she was really a storyteller. She flew out on full moon nights to find someone she could tell a story to. At least this is what Grandma said. Once she had asked the storyteller to tell her a tale of long ago. This was the story she heard..

“Long, long ago, there was not a single light in the black, night sky. Wicked spirits and other evil creatures roamed about making mischief. Children were afraid to go to sleep and mothers and fathers ran out of bedtime stories to tell them. Nobody could go for long walks, hand in hand, after dark. Everything had to be done during the day and there wasn't always time to finish things before the sunset. All this was before the discovery of fire, of course.

One day, the people decided to hold a great meeting. The animals came too, for in those times the people and animals could still talk to each other. Everyone came from far and near to discuss this matter of dark and dangerous night.

“We have to make night safe for our children,” said the mothers.

“The darkness steals our songs,” said the birds.

“It's boring,” said the teenagers.

One by one, they all had their say. Everyone finally agreed that what was needed was light in the night sky. Each person or animal had their own special idea of what this new light should be. But how were they going to make it? There was a great deal of talking. The wise owls gave a lot of helpful advice and at last a plan was made.

The men, with the help of the woodpeckers, carved out a giant wooden bowl. The cows poured fresh creamy milk into the bowl. The children got up early in the morning and collected dewdrops that glistened with the light of the rising sun. Hundreds of white butterflies flew in to sprinkle a little bit of the soft powder from their fluttering wings. The nightingales sang their most beautiful melodies. The women gathered shimmering pearls from the sea and mixed them with all the other ingredients. Those who had nothing else to give cried big silver tears into the bowl. Then everyone took a turn at giving the special mixture a stir. At last it was ready.

The elephants helped move the giant bowl next to the tallest tree in the world. A team of clever spiders spun a ladder of strong cobwebs from the top of the tree right across the sky. The monkey family climbed the tree and swung onto the cobweb ladder.

“Careful!” cried the watching folk below. The giraffes dipped brushes made of feathers into the bowl and handed them to the nearest monkey who passed it along to the next monkey, till the topmost monkeys got them and began to paint a splendid, shining ball in the darkness. Sometimes the mixture dripped from the brushes, splashing stars across the sky. Slowly the darkness faded. A soft silver glow filled the night.

“Ah!” sighed the watching animals and people in wonder. They had done it!”

So that is how the moon came up to be in the sky. As for the evil creatures of the dark, they were forced to go into hiding and hardly ever bothered anyone at all.

The End

The D-Word

Everyone knows it, some go through it, and many think it's nothing. It's not a bad word. Simply put, it's just this agonizing and damaging state. Its tactic is well known, but you never see it coming. It waits quietly in the back until the time is right to pounce.

I found out only a month and a half back. I never really knew why I got those all-of-a-sudden outbursts. I'd be moody and excessively aggressive. I had gone mad. But I was the last, the last to know.

Its plan doesn't just end there. Its next move is to make you feel so worthless that you start hating yourself for the silliest of reasons. It amplifies all of your emotions except for happiness. In no time, you'll be drowning in your feelings.

Calling me a mess was all it took to break me. I'd start crying a river. I would go over all my flaws, one by one. Think about my grades, my lack of brains, how everyone else is always better than me, the way I get all emotional over nothing, and then I see the whole picture and feel shattered all over again at how flawed I am.

Its next step is to make you do nothing but burrow yourself into your sorrow. "Nothing you try to do now will matter because you will only fail miserably. Deadbeat!"

I was staring at the ceiling again. My productivity level was at its lowest. There was always this demotivating feeling lingering in my head. All I could do was wryly recognize that I was sitting only on a tower of homework and admiring the horizon every day.

It's like a cavity constantly developing. The black void only grows bigger and stronger, sucking in all that is left of you. You become a jigsaw puzzle with pieces missing. You can never put it all back together.

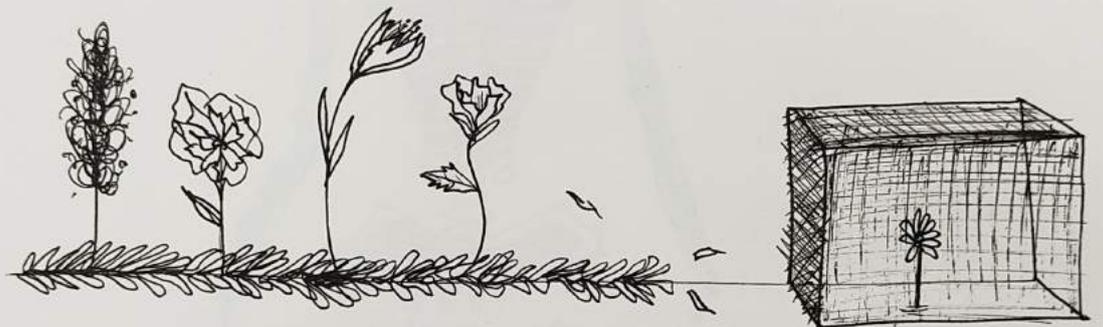
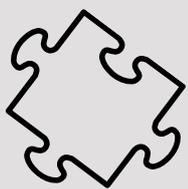
My friends have been telling me they don't know who I am anymore. It hurt in the beginning when I didn't realize I was losing myself, but now I myself wonder who I am.

It then takes control of you, you are now merely a puppet dangling from the strings of hair you've pulled out.

I have been lost in the sea of my sufferings, all the fishes' scales reflecting this broken form of me. I know to do nothing anymore. I sit on this boat and let it take me wherever it can.

Its plan is truly endless, but only to those who haven't ended themselves. You can get over it, but once you have been to this place, you can never get rid of the forever haunting memories it has stored in you.

Ruchira Prathap, VIII
(written in July, 2021)



i don't belong here .

The Art of Relationship

Let me start by telling you about a painting. A painting which I connected with at the very first glance. It is not a work that is vibrant in colour, brilliant in technique or breath-taking. It is in fact awfully simple, yet intriguing.

It is a painting by René Magritte, rectangular, in portrait form. At the bottom, there is a distant bluish-grey hill. At the base of the hill, a road can be seen dividing the green landscape. The sky makes up most of the painting. It is



patchy, grey and white. It looks like a dull gloomy, monsoon day. The entire scenery is rather bland. But suspended mid-air, slightly towards the right-hand side, are two figures dressed in black suits and bowler hats. They are just there, drifting in the ashy sky, close together, their backs facing us. The painting is titled "The Art of Conversation".

I connected with this painting instantly, because it evoked how I would often find myself deeply immersed in a discussion, completely involved with painting, or enveloped in the beauty of a scene, when hardly anything else transpired in my mind. It was just me and the other, whatever it might be, floating in the substance of my relationship like the suspended men in black.

When I made this connection, I realized that this painting which I relate to so deeply signified the most basic of things to me - relationships connected with this painting instantly, because it evoked how I would often find myself so deeply immersed in a discussion, completely involved with painting or enveloped in the beauty of a scene, when hardly anything else transpired in my mind. It was just me and the other,

whatever it might be, floating in the substance of my relationship like the suspended men in black.

When I made this connection, I realized that this painting signified the most basic of things to me - relationships. In the five years I have spent here, there have been multiple relationships that have really helped me grow.

Art, for instance, started off as a mere endeavour to create objects of visual appeal. The outer aesthetic was all that mattered. But as time passed, it evolved into something very different. It almost became a way of understanding myself from a different point of view. In engaging with art deeply, I seemed able to deconstruct the constructs I held on to. Immersed in this solitude, I have discovered this deep feeling for art.

It is also from relationships with people that I have learnt greatly. I have learnt to not be weighed down by hurt, to not take myself too seriously. I have learnt to really question and challenge ideas, but most importantly, I think I have learnt how to relate with others in a manner where I am completely present, with affection, open and, perhaps, vulnerable.

Having just two weeks left on this hilltop, I feel that it's the relationships in this place, which have given rise to discussions, laughter, happiness, beauty, solitude and affection that I will miss the most. I hope all of you find your own different relationship with this place - that deep one. For I believe that there is something remarkable here - even with all its flaws.

My life in Sahyadri has often felt as if I was floating like those figures in the René Magritte painting - floating in the beauty, happiness, affection and connectedness of this little hilltop; floating, yet so deeply related. I feel the memories of this place and the people in it will resonate each time I shall gaze upon that painting - 'The Art of Conversation', or more like 'The Art of Relationship'.

Nethra Prathap, alumna (2019-20)

KIDS TRYING TO GET INTO OTHER DORM PARTIES



**LAKSHMAN TELANG SIR
WAITING TO PLAY IN गाइए गणपति**



imgflip.com

Hush-Hush

She stares at the nacreous shell in her hand, smooth but for one creamy pearl jutting out, embedded into the surface. It seemed to be in a dilemma, as though it wanted freedom but was held down by the comfort of its bubble. She had never seen one like it before, and she had been to many beaches where she could do what she loved most - combing over the sands for oddities of shapes she could never anticipate, for every single one of them, like a snowflake, was unique.



A “seashell”, her father had called it, when she went running to him 3 years ago after having found one on her first trip to the beach. It was a rather difficult word to say, and she had to try multiple times to get it right. What surprised her though was the fact that her father seemed indifferent to its existence, almost as if it were common.

However, it clearly wasn't. That one had been different from the one near her left foot, and the latter had been different from the one in front of her. When her father had explained that these strange, curious stones were once home to creatures, she had asked, "Creatures like you and me?" "No," he had replied. "These are much smaller." She couldn't understand why, if he could acknowledge the dissimilarity between these small life forms and us humans, he couldn't see the difference between one shell and another.

Her father had also told her that some shells were very old, even older than herself. This fact made them all the more enigmatic, and she wanted so badly to know each of their stories. History fascinated her. She loved not knowing things, because she loved the feeling of getting to know them. She could hear their stories if she listened carefully, holding them up to her ears, in a language she couldn't understand. She liked to whisper secrets to them too, because she knew they wouldn't understand. It was a reciprocal relationship, and one she cherished. She liked to think of them as stars on the ground, except even better because she could hold them in her hand (although she really did want to hold the stars as well). She found comfort in these entities, and she always had things to tell them.

This particular shell however, makes her uncomfortable, and she realises she doesn't want to tell it her secret. It looks diseased, the pearl a tumour adulterating its mild and polished interior. She doesn't understand why she feels this way, but the sight of it disturbs her. With a mighty swing of her small arm, she casts the shell into the ocean, and wishes she never meets it again.

Praapthi Prabakar, XII

The Way We Are

On the hilltop of a hill in a school, there lived a group of children of a class. This was where he lived, who this is about.

“Oh, no!” groaned Ishan, “I am late for P.T.!”

It was 6:42 a.m. when Ishan sprinted out of the dorm towards the porch. He managed to reach the porch just before 6:45 a.m. There was a lot of commotion. Groups of children were scattered here and there. Some solitary ones wandered about, some sat on benches thinking of excuses to make. Some were missing, still sleeping in their beds - bunkers, they were called. Ishan was not one of them.

“Hey, Ishan! *Itna* late!” said Shenu, nodding his head like a cow, “What happened!”

“Nothing man! I couldn’t find my sock,” Ishan replied, “So, where is Akka?”

Shenu was the info boy. He would always keep himself updated, but this time he had no answer. He was a bit imaginative in his news, agreed, but did a good job of gathering news. He was about the same height as Ishan and had brown eyes, tanned arms and fast legs (perfect for a newsboy). He was good friends with Ishan.

Ishan moved towards the bench, an old item of outdoor furniture, made of long, thin planks as the seat. As usual, a little boy was sitting there. He said he didn’t like to do P.T. and took advantage of his special skill – “merging with the background” - to go unnoticed while the others were busy doing P.T.

It was 6:50 a.m. when some teacher did turn up. It was Suma Akka, a senior teacher.

“Hey, children! Sorry, there is no P.T. today” (As if anyone wanted it!) “We have a special early assembly today. Sorry, you were not informed earlier,” she said.

This was extremely irritating for some people (including Ishan) as they could have got the extra sleep they treasured so much. After the shuffling of feet and exaggerated groans by people who wanted their presence and love for P.T. known to all, there was silence again in the porch.

“Ha! Thank God, there is no P.T. today!” shouted Aayush, whose sprain could as easily develop into a fracture as his “presents” could into “absents”.

“Hmm... let’s see what’s for breakfast,” said Ishan after he had roamed around with Aayush for a few minutes.

The DH was usually filled with people with varying appetites, but some had huge ones! Namely, Buldo (his pet name of course!). He was the cook’s nightmare! At any given moment you could (if you would dare check) find the better part of his body and plate (which he secretly carried everywhere) filled with food. He wasn’t fat! He was enormously fat! You would expect him to, but if you did anything that was a threat to his plate or his food or his appetite, he would roar like King Kong and smash after you like a Hippo and give you a Blue-Whale, bone-crushing slam. This was usually considered enough reason to be exempted from P.T. for 2 weeks.

There were others, of course, who tried to subtly prove they were thin by making you well aware of how little they ate.

Today's course was *poha* and a sweet *halwa*. Ishan looked at his plate as he sat at the table. Yellowish, damp, puffed rice. Small dots of spices (for which Ishan didn't have any taste) on it and a few groundnuts hidden here and there. Thin slices of onion and tomato, a little too scarce on the yellow terrain. The next item on board, the brown *halwa*. Perfectly plain body. Head nowhere to be seen. No irregularities anywhere. A perfect blob. Too perfect to be eaten. Light rays bounced off his brown body, making his identical siblings on other plates aware he was there.

Ishan sighed. He needed something good to eat. He needed the first meal of the day to be refreshing and energizing. This was going to take some time.

“Okay, children! Get out your notebooks! How many times have I told you to be ready for class!” shouted Akka. Students hurriedly got their books and stationery out. But this was not over yet.

“May I enter, Akka?” Champu mumbled, startling Akka.

“Huh!” Akka said, quickly regaining her composure. Meanwhile, some students started laughing, Akka shushed the others and drew her attention to Champu, “So, why are you so late!” Akka demanded sternly but not loudly. Her interrogation mode was on!

Sorry, Akka, it won't happen... um... from um... next class,” Champu said, moving slowly towards his seat.

“No, wait, please! Where were you mister, I want the real answer! No excuses!”

Ishan knew it would take another 5 minutes for this to end and, although this wasn't his idea of a classroom scene, he knew this was going to stay with him for a long time. He knew he would miss this, this along with all the other wonderful things that happened to him here.

Time flew, and soon classes were over, it was Rest Time! It was Music Time!

"..Huh! Hey! Oh, yeah! nananana.. tananana.. ..lalalala..!"

This was what happened during rest time. Ishan's dorm was like any other dorm, with a little more aggressive music than others, perhaps, but like others, they too had rest time music. This time of the day was also the visiting time. You could find a lot of people from foreign dorms. This was also the trading time. The most unrestful part of the day, labelled rest time. Ishan took this time to read the fat book he had got from the library and would read the rest in the next rest time.

People didn't play a huge variety of games during games time. Hockey or football in the field, volleyball in the volleyball court, badminton in the badminton court, etc.

Ishan chose to play badminton, he found it peaceful. The movement of the hands, the occasional movement of the legs and the satisfying sound of the racket. After tea, Ishan headed straight to his dorm. Outside the gate, the sound of water splashing was audible.

He had enjoyed the game with Nail and Cambi!

The snacks served at tea were nice too. Inside, he looked at the mirror, he was as red as a tomato (probably a little less).

He quickly went to take a bath. Getting distracted was very easy during this part of the day as people were in a fun mood. Getting even a little bit distracted could easily result in a 30 min fun time, leading to being late for prep (which he was good at).

He occasionally made musical noises while taking a bath, which was interpreted as singing. He liked to do this because it relaxed every part of his body somehow and gave him that pleasant feeling which comes from Bathroom Singing.

After 10 minutes, he was back in his room. For some reason, he felt suddenly tired. He fell on his bed and closed his eyes. He thought about his day, his friends, well aware that it was almost prep, and that Shenu, who was sitting on the bed beside his would wake him up if he fell asleep. He then fell asleep.

“Hey, Ishan! Wake up! We are late for prep!” Shenu exclaimed and dashed outside.

“Huh! Oh, no!” Ishan leapt off his bed realizing he was already late by about 5 min for prep, “Wait for me!”

They ran out of the dorm as fast as they could! They were good runners: within seconds they had arrived a few metres away from the classroom! They walked a few steps and realized the teacher wasn't there! Suddenly -

“Ishhaaaan! Aaaaahh!” Shenu shouted!

Ishan whirled around as his heart gave a mighty thump. He fell back and as he caught sight of what was happening, his heart began to race. It was a dog, and it had attacked Shenu! Adrenalin swam into Ishan's blood as Shenu screamed even louder! Ishan's heart was pounding furiously now. His chest and lungs ached as he fell to the ground.

The dog turned around, saw Ishan and gave a loud bark! It started growling and started moving towards him. Ishan, still on the ground, frantically started pushing his body backwards with his legs and hands in a desperate attempt to get away.

He looked around for help. Through the window, he saw his classmates inside the class looking at Shenu and the dog, then him. He knew he would feel safe with them. They were so close, yet so far. He then looked at Shenu who was gripping his stomach and was lying on the ground, moaning, crying. There was no way out. He was terrified. Ishan again looked at Shenu who was now looking at him, still crying and terrified, and then he looked at the dog moving towards him, 3 metres away.

Ishan suddenly grew angry at the dog who had mercilessly bit Shenu and had given him so much pain! He kicked the dog, hard! And, looking at Shenu, he gave it another kick! The dog, now really mad, tore at Ishan. It was futile trying to run away; still, he tried. The dog caught up in a couple of bounds and sank his teeth into Ishan's thigh.

Ishan sat up, his heart aching. He gripped his thigh and found that it was fine, uninjured. It had just been a bad dream. He looked around for Shenu and found him on the same bed he was on earlier. Ishan tumbled down to his bed and gripped him. He needed his friends, his company, his gang. He took a deep breath and hugged him.

Ishan Kashyap, VIII

Class 12
(most of) the batch of 2020-21



Top row: Ekam, Prathmesh, Abhigyan, Harsh,
Puja, Tanmaya

Sloping right: Vedika, Medha, Sangitha, Adi, Siddha, Mahi,
Ashwin, Ananya, Praapthi, Krishang

Sitting: Harshini, Dhanika, Siri, Bhavana,
Dhruv, Divya akka

Class 12

(most of) the batch of 2020-21



Standing: Mahi, Ashwin, Prathmesh, Sangitha, Abhigyan,
Siddha, Krishang, Adi, Ekam, Harsh, Dhruv, Vedika

Sitting: Bhavana, Medha, Ananya, Puja, Praapthi, Tanmaya,
Harshini, Dhanika, Siri

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2020-21



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