

POETRY FORUM ANTHOLOGY

Volume XI



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THE POETRY FORUM

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VOLUME XI

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EDITORS' NOTE

“The passive voice is your killer’s voice.
From time to time, they vote.
From time to time, language dies.
It is dying now.
Who is alive to speak it?” -Fady Joudah

Poetry might not always represent standing on the stage, with the mic held in one’s hand, or even speaking words of a grandiose nature. Sometimes, it is just a few lines scrawled on the paper, during recess, while waiting in a bus, or remembering a certain memory. This anthology is created with the same goal of reflecting and containing all these thoughts, feelings, and haphazard lines strung together for days later to open, read, and cherish.

The theme for the volume XI of Poetry Forum Anthology is decided to be ‘opposites’. It is not rigidly constrained to this word, as one can never do with poetry. It is like a child; the more you restrain it, the more it wants to break free. While the words ‘play against’ each other, ‘opposites’ with the way one stands with a spear and the other with a shield, one holding the sun, the other looking for the moon, the poems collectively come together to build one voice. The voice might not always be enough for one to radicalise or protest, but it is already doing so much on paper. Reading these words written by the students, one looks at their pen and is moved to write a line or two.

This anthology would be our humble endeavour, for you to stop, and look back, maybe at the flowers, or birds, or even think about why it does not belong on your shelf. Thus, whatever thought it invokes, it would come with the parting gift of emotion as well, which is what the poets of today and tomorrow desire from their readers. We, the editors, thank you, once again, for choosing to pick this up and giving poetry a chance.

Thanking you,
Reeti Ghosh, and Rayana Roy.

CONTENTS

MY YEARNING TAKES YOUR SHADOW	Sangya Pal	6
PAPER BOAT	Sananda Dey	7
FIEND	Sampaorna Sen	7
IN PERPETUALITY	Sudrish Chakraborty	8
কলঙ্কিনী	Sanjana Saha	9
SCHOOL OF THE DEAD (A PASSING THOUGHT)	Triasha Mondal	10
MY BOON, MY BANE	Abhipsa Koley	11
শুকনো গোলাপ	Sanjana Saha	12
THE UNDESIRED CHRISTMAS.	Anushka Mukherjee	13
এসব কথার কথা	Sananda Dey	14
ETERNAL EMBRACE	Sudrish Chakraborty	15
LORE	Anoushka Dutta	16
UNTITLED	Vanshika Chawla	17
ILLUSION OF LOVE	Anoushka Dutta	18
HOME	Anoushka Dutta	19
WISTFUL SERENADE	Sudrish Chakraborty	21
BONES	Sampaorna Sen	22
ANGER MANAGEMENT	Amrita Guha	23
HOME!	Sugandha Mukherjee	24
THE DEVIL	Sugandha Mukherjee	25
CHASED BY SHADOWS: A REFLECTION	Sugandha Mukherjee	26
SAFIAH, MUHABBAT STARTS WITH MEEM (ମୁହାବତ)	Zarin Ashia	27
WHO IS A TEACHER?	Aishi Gangopadhyay	28
FATEBOUND	Shinjini Sarkar	28
FESTIVITY	Soumiti Das	29

UNKNOWN SAVIOR	Shinjini Sarkar	30
THE BLUE YOUTH	Aishi Gangopadhyay	32
A QUESTION ABOUT WOMEN'S SAFETY	Aishi Gangopadhyay	33
THE UNBINDING: A SYMPHONY OF SORROW AND FATE	Munazzah Shamim	34
A CONVERSATION WITH A BLACK DOG	Sangya Pal	35
THE SILENT EMANCIPATION	Munazzah Shamim	36
NOT A HAIKU	Munazzah Shamim	37
BASEMENT SYMPHONY	Rayana Roy	38
BIRTH OF A DAY	Rayana Roy	40
GRATITUDE	Reeti Ghosh	42

Sangya Pal
English Department,
First Year.

MY YEARNING TAKES YOUR SHADOW

I attend to my lover
the way autumn seeks the sun.

Write to me
I beg.

Write back: at the end of the day,
when the oil has run low
and the beggars are out
breaking the moon to dip into milk.

My ear's by your lips:
whisper back, write back;
carve us out with your tongue.

Dip the moon into saccharine honey,
wash away my cadence slow,
and the beggars are shy
to dare to steal our silk wrapped sun.

Bleed the sun
to oil.

Write me some blood; I beg,
without wax, do write me back.

Sananda Dey
English Department,
First Year.

PAPER BOAT

Jahan's grief flickers the grey
On the wizened floor of Yamuna.
Sol Invictus drowning in ocean each eve,
(Which scars the firmament with celestial glitters)-
Which deplacentates every morn from the eastern elevation.
Then she saw the damsel with a dulcimer,
Like lady Lazarus with her head rested on Mira's breast,
Suddenly the petrichor brings the grace of Eden.
Once upon a time there lived a river in Indies,
Where a paper boat was dropped by the son of poor artisan,
The boat voyaged to meet the sea
But the rivulet still muse on
And cushions the dream of it.

Sampoorna Sen
Psychology Department,
Second Year.

FIEND

I am tired
of fighting this foe;
the one who bleeds me,
the one who soothes my innocent attempts at chastising my world.
The glass shards grow sharper.
Were you there to begin with?
The illusion of my drunken dance of madness,
the swish of the softest fingers,
the whispers of the siren;
Who are you calling mirror? A failure?
Who is real? The translucent image cast on the glass
or the solid waste of space staring at it with wide harrowed eyes?

Was it always so dark in here?
So wretched? Pitiful?
Why do you smile reflection?
Why do you mirror the movements of a being who can't help but replicate those
near him?
Can you hear the music? The shrill shrieks? the bass of doom?
the sounds of death's footsteps mirror?
I hope your shards pierced my eyes instead of showing me the truth.

Sudrisha Chakraborty
Psychology Department,
First Year.

IN PERPETUITY

At the dawn of night,
The star less and smoky sky-
Wind waltzed all through the way
To them; without a fail, like always.

The smell of blood so strong and dear
And yet he fears; abandoning the arms-
Warm, playful, lively- tightly
Clasping the cold and white ones.

Again like always, at this time of year
They spun and twirled; blithe-
Filled with enamour and dazzled
With passion and longing.

Then they bade farewell unwillingly.
She went back, like the routine.
And he, entered his coffin
Like he had done always.

Sanjana Saha
History Department,
First Year.

কলঙ্কিনী

রাধা হয়ে ভালোবেসে যাব,
মীরা হয়ে অপেক্ষায় রইব...
কলঙ্কিনী হয়ে বরমাল্য দেব, শুধু তোমাকেই!
তোমাকে হয়ত সহস্র গোপী বেষ্টন করে রইবে,
হয়ত চরিত্রের দাগ দিয়ে আমাকে দূরে ঠেলে দেবে সমাজ,
হয়তো তুমি ঠিকানা হবে কোনো ষোড়শ সহস্র নারীর;
তবুও আমি হতভাগী ভালোবেসে যাব তোমাকে,
একুশ শতকের কলঙ্কিনী হয়ে!
তোমার প্রেমে যখন মাতোয়ারা সারা দুনিয়া,
তোমাকে পাওয়ার জন্য হাহাকার আলাচে-কানাচে,
তুমি যখন একমেবাদ্বিতীয়ম সর্বসাধারণীর স্বামী,
তখনও প্রিয়, শুধু ভালোবেসে যাব তোমাকেই!
এ এক সাধারণীর ভালোবাসা নয়,
এ হল কলঙ্কিনীর ভালোবাসা।
এই ভালোবাসায় জর্জরিত হয়েছে দোর্দন্তপ্রতাপ পঞ্চপুরুষ,
আজ এই ভালোবাসায় শিকার করব তোমাকে!
তবে, প্রেমিকা হয়ে নয়,
শুধু এক প্রিয়তমা সখী হয়ে...
কী করে দিই তোমাকে আমার মনের ছদ্য?
এ যে সমাজের চোখে কলঙ্কিনী, সখা!

Triasha Mondal
English Department,
Second Year.

SCHOOL OF THE DEAD (A PASSING THOUGHT)

Alas for the ravaged girl, pallid and time-torn;
Bewitched by some brutish beast; how long should she mourn?
In some nocturnal blackness; inwrought some careless dream
Unbeknownst; whose weight has discounted smile from her mien.
Poor creature! A bedraggled fool,
Bled for louts, now feasting on you-
Why now lament your own child's theft,
For them to tell you, your childhood years' still left.
Soon, the deserts grew more deserted, no traveller left,
The brooks' thawed, birds silenced, all hopes bereft—
You bended to your God, hoping for some hope;
Pity such piety; where impotence is the heroic trope.
Why then, you embroider rugs around the wounds
Only to allow them to kill you again?
I reckon, the reason must be painful to explain.
How do you pardon those who
Bit your pretty heart in two
How old were you, when you buried you,
How old were you, when you bid joy adieu?
Halt the marching time; there's something I hear,
In this lone hour of despair
Or is it tender you,
Still awaiting them to judge fair?

Abhipsa Koley
English Department,
First Year.

MY BOON, MY BANE

They say the eyes are the windows to the soul
They say the heart is the key to one's alcove
They say only fools are blinded by love
They say love paints your canvas anew
And I, wholeheartedly agree.

I met a beauty in early October
With whom I dreamt of getting older
Like all lovers, I had written my memoirs of romance.
Because amidst her azure eyes, I had glimpsed an earthly paradise.

Blindfolded by glassy promises of forever,
I had glided on the sandy castle of raptures
Little did I know that instead of lover's bliss,
I had entered into the realm of a serpent's hiss.

Her sapphire eyes were encrusted with Halahal
Her raspberry cheeks had a paint of cruor
Her spiked mellifluous voice was laced with ardour
Her enchanting lips were dipped in ambrosia
Coated with the poison of Medusa.

Frozen and alone, abandoned and forgotten,
I lay suspended in the cycle of time.
My body has been paralyzed but my mind is mobile.
Sinking into my bed of memories, I realised
That I don't mind being victimized.

Sanjana Saha
History Department,
First Year.

শুকনো গোলাপ

প্রিয়, ডায়রীর ভাঁজে লুকিয়ে রেখেছি তোমার দেওয়া গোলাপখানি-
শুকনো গোলাপটি বুরাতে পারেনি আজ সে শুধুই হারানো স্মৃতি;
অজস্র নীলের মাঝে সে ছিল আমার প্রেমের বারাল্দা।
তোমার ডাকঘর থেকে সেই বারাল্দায় জমা হত অসংখ্য চিঠি,
সম্মোধনে, "প্রিয়তমা"।

মনে পড়ে, ভিক্টোরিয়ার গোধূলিতে ঠোঁট দুখানি ভিজিয়ে দিতে দিতে
বলেছিলে, "ভালোবাসব শুধু তোমাকেই"!
প্রতিশ্রূতির সূপে পরিণয়ের স্বপ্ন দেখাতে একবারও কুর্চিত হওনি!
রবিবারের সন্ধ্যায় বিদায়ক্ষণে বলেছিলে,
"অপেক্ষায় থেকো, আসব ফিরে শিগগিরই"...

ছিলাম অপেক্ষায়। বছর পাঁচেক।
বছর পাঁচেক পরে আবার দেখলাম তোমায়, সেই ভিক্টোরিয়াতেই।
তবে, এক আধুনিকার বাহতোরে, প্রেমিকার আদরে...
সেইদিনের গোধূলি বিকেল আজও ছিল,
ছিল আমার ভালোবাসার মানুষও--
শুধু সেই ছবি থেকে বিলীন হয়ে গেল আমার শুকনো গোলাপটি।

Anushka Mukherjee
English Department,
First Year.

THE UNDESIRED CHRISTMAS.

While returning from the church,
On the coldest wintery eve,
She heard the sleigh bell tunes,
Floating in the heather land breeze.
Carols played, wild and sweet,
Like stardust all over.
And yet she sighed, heavy.
Her mother stood beside her, silent;
Watching the sluggish stream,
Create bubbles of survival.
Later, after she went home,

Her mother graced the festive mood,
With apple pie and pudding cakes.
But she sat by the window aisle,
Beside the dull lampshade.

As she looked at the sparkling Christmas trees,
Of snowy Bethlehem,
She remembered her first Christmas,
Filled with laughter and happiness.
She smiled in nostalgia.
Her mother had said,

“Today the snow angel blesses the child”.
But lest she knew; silently,

In no time, the world revolved from night to day,
She had prayed the battle to end.
And people went to unwrap their boxes of fulfilment.
She, as well, received an unwished box.
Opening it with bewilderment, she found a note in there.
As she read it,
Tears rolled down her pale cheeks.

She knew well, her grandma had written it then.
She looked at her mother,
With astonishment in eyes.
At night, she went up to her terrace,
And stood there by the edge.
The night was starry,
But her heart was immersed
In the sea of dark, darkest clouds.
The invigorating breeze passed through over her face,
reigniting her suppressed pain of loss.
She wanted to relive the moment, once again.
But this time she wanted to be with the one she was gazing at.

Sananda Dey
English Department,
First Year.

এসব কথার কথা

ফ্যাতাডুর দেশে পোড়া মানুষের গন্ধ টেকে রাখে বাতাস,
যদি সে একটি পয়সা পায় পরলোকের প্রাঙ্গণে।
পুরনো এক সূর ভেসে আসে কাঁটা তারকে উপেক্ষা করে,
লেগে থাকে সাময়িক বরথাস্ত।
তোমার খুদা কি ক্ষুদার খোঁজ রাখে?
যে শহরের বুক চিরে চলে যায় পোর্শে, শেঞ্জোলে-
সেই রাস্তার ধারে, হোর্ডিংয়ের আড়ালে, লেগে থাকে হাহাকার, ডাকে খুদাকে।
আকাল আকাল করে গলা ফাটানো চিংকার করে পৃথিবী,
আর হিপোক্রিটরা সঠিক পথ খুঁজে দরবার দখল করে।
আরে এসব কথার কথা।
আরে ঘুমটা মৃত্যু নয়,
ঘুমটা স্বপ্ন দেখার রাস্তা।
স্বপ্নে জীবন বদলে যায়।
নিজের ছায়া স্পষ্ট, উজ্জ্বল; পথ মসৃণ।
নিকষ কালো অঙ্ককারও জ্যোৎস্নালোকিত।

Sudrisha Chakraborty
Psychology Department,
First Year.

ETERNAL EMBRACE

In shadows deep, where darkness thrives
Resides, with fiery eyes-
The rebels, cast from grace,
They fell from heaven, a timeless chase.

In twilight's embrace where shadows meet
Lucifer's flames and Lilith's heat
Arm in arm they roam the abyss
Sharing secrets in hushed bliss.

With whispers of temptation, they entice.
Each kiss a sinful sacrifice.
For where the Devil's love does dwell
Lies a tale of passion, deeper than hell.

An union born in eternal night
Love that never fades from sight
Through the ages, their love shall endure
In the realm where darkness is pure.

A bond forged in flames of desire,
Their heart's ablaze with forbidden fire.
Entwined together, where darkness thrives
Lucifer and Lilith's love survives.

Anoushka Dutta
Psychology Department,
Second Year.

LORE

She sat by the shore,
Powerless and vulnerable,
The gliding waves approach their destination,
Shore-bound they continue,
Annihilating all that obstructs,
And recede back like a distant memory,
Or a dream so murky,
Echoing the cry of that raging heart,
Like the saving water that alleviates the aflame soul,
In the sombre night air.

They hid in the shadows,
Biding their time,
Conceiving that malicious scheme,
The approaching sunrise brings forth a new dawn,
She sauntered ever so slowly into the shadows,
They who waited with bated breaths,
Now ready to pounce,
But met with that stony gaze,
Her face depicting the pain she felt,
And as the sun rose in the sky,
Bathing the vicinity in that blinding light,
Now sprung the awareness,
Breaking the spell of allure,
For they could now see her venomous locks,
Flowing in the crisp morning air,
And as they made a dash,
Came the horrid realization,
They were immobile,
They were stone.

She spared a fleeting glance at her creations,
Her sultry laughter echoing in the salty beach air,
As she strolled away callously,
Fading away in the distance,
Between the boundaries of the known and unknown,
For she was merely a forgotten lore,
The grand illusion of innocent seduction -

Vanshika Chawla
Psychology Department,
Second Year.

UNTITLED

Pain and art are so closely related.
Like two different coloured threads intertwined with each other, to make the
prettiest garment.

Whenever my heart pains, it finds comfort in art
In music, in poetry and in simply staring at Van Gogh's Starry Night
I am reminded of how he made it while suffering from depression in an asylum
No, I do not believe in romanticising depression however, all I can think of is in
all of that pain, art was his recourse.
Be it Van Gogh's starry night, Amrita Pritam's "mein tenu fer milaengi" or Faiz Ahmed Faiz saying "Dil na-umeed toh nahi nakam hi toh hai, lambi hai gham ki
Shaam magar shaam hi toh hai", we are surrounded by someone's pain
translated into art, to which we turn to when our heart aches.

Anoushka Dutta
Psychology Department,
Second Year.

ILLUSION OF LOVE

I was burning,
Burning in the hellfire,
Craving a destruction so sweet,
They who tainted my soul,
Snatched away my blissful innocence,
They were the pretty monsters,
Hiding behind facades of portrayed goodness,
They manipulated the game,
Turning all things away,
They were the saints,
And I was the mad woman,
Obsessed with the hero,
Harbouring malice against the innocent beauty,
I schemed and failed,
Failed to regain my dignity,
Dignity that was snatched away,
Snatched by that glorified hero,
I remember those times all too well,
When I was just an unmoulded piece of clay,
He lured me with tales of love,
Love that I thought was pure,
And as I stand burning today,
I promise I shall seek vengeance,
Perhaps in another lifetime,
Perhaps in another timeline,
I shall be the beloved heroine,
And they the known sinners.

Anoushka Dutta
Psychology Department,
Second Year.

HOME

In a faraway land she sat,
By the shore,
On the rock,
Her feet,
Blistered and swollen,
Turning a lovely bluish-green,
So was the distant sky,
The light fading away,
Darkness incoming,
The horizon calling the sun back
home,
And so it rains,
Drizzling and then tumultuous,
Her flowing locks,
Wet from the rain,
Clinging to her shadowy face,
She sat unaware,
Lifeless and miles away,
As the last of the fleet sailed away,
Leaving behind the eerie silence,
Of crickets and the thrush,
She lost in her thoughts,
Of that faraway London,
The times of happiness,
And the baked goodness and carols,
She could smell the Christmas in the
air,
As her feet glided over the damp
winter floor,
Covered in that snowy goodness,
Hiding away all that living,
In abodes of celebration,
And the joyous laughter,
Ringing in the chilly night air.

The reverie broke,

As the awareness set in,
Of loneliness and devoid of joy,
The distant whisper calls her back home,
The lament of the sinister sirens,
Luring her into that murky water,
Infested with the darkness felt within,
And as she drowned,
Reminiscing her failure of a life,
All that was hers,
Slipped away like the grains of sand,
For they were never hers,
The bitter truth she learnt,
All was but a mistake,
The illusion called life,
And as the light left her tired eyes,
She knew she could finally sleep,
The everlasting peaceful sleep,
She knew that she was finally home

Sudrisha Chakraborty
Psychology Department,
First Year.

WISTFUL SERENADE

A starlit night
With you by my side, well...
I would never surrender this moment to my dreams,
All I have to reckon
Is to be in unison
With your pace and love for me

Oh! How I think of your obsidian eyes!
Your wine-soaked plumped cheeks,
Oh! How you utter my name
From yours, Garnet-hued lips.

I tossed and turned your hair
And you kept pouting 'bout it...
Well, I do like to tease you for
Hearing my name from your gently curved rubies.

I hope you see my gaze
Filled with naught but your face.
And yet my Amore
You take my words just as jest!

Would you care to spare your mind
In plotting a scene where I'll be dead?
Though I'm sure for it; my death will lie
In my Ishtar's heartless gaze.

Pray forgive me to imburse you
With my self-spun tapestry.
I wish you would at least shed for me
Tears of long-shunned affinity.

Would utter a few mumbled and
Hushed words of your suppressed
Fervour for the begone soul-
And Oh! I hope you won't try to shun my present feelings
For my love can't help but yearn for more...

Sampoorna Sen
Psychology Department,
Second Year.

BONES

Cracking of the cranium, sparks start to fly
Wine at the cellar, sweet, red and kissed with the ichor of a romantic escapade
Cascades down one's vale of terror

Who do I see, white as a feather
Sinews tangling by its waist, muscles stretched like leather
Bones; the exoskeleton of my malevolent vengeance
Patterned, dignified, respected sustenance
Carry my blood, organs and smoke
Carry my little human curses bespoke
Bones, not of China, Porcelain or Ash
Eroded by the brothers care and havoc, the tectonic forces clash
Bones in the mallet, Bones on nails
Bones of the dreamer, the adventurer on sail
Bones of silverware, of the labourer and the King
All asleep in a graveyard, mutely waiting for the ravens to sing
Bones of my mother, and aliens called women who sang woes of peace
Their birth a transaction of human purity, their act meant to appease
Bones of the Human and the Monster within
The one who growls at night, and is martyred by spring
Bones of civilizations ancient, of emperor and enigma
Bones of witches burnt, science, poverty and stigma

Bones of chemicals, laboratory of burnt potassium, olfaction of iodine
If your skull is thick-headed creature, why is your spine thin?
Bones shaped long and wide, the warriors severed leg howls
The mother produces dairy, the owner slaughters her fowl
Bones of the Soil, the Sea, the God, The Earthen pot
Prometheus stares achingly, at his fire burning his blessed lot

Bones you are strength, a bridge, a story

I am an invertebrate; heaven deprives me of your glory.

Amrita Guha
English Department,
Second Year.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

The internet recommends introspection,
Journalling, mindfulness, meditation,
Exercise, breathing, and communication.

The news asks to fix society
Capitalists, massacres, bigotry:
A billion voices' stridency.

Writers say its real name is sorrow
Left too long to rot till tomorrow,
A bomb ticking on time borrowed.

Authority talks of self-control,
A list of traditions one must uphold,
And the irredeemable nature of revolt.

Psychology wants to examine my childhood,
A latent brain made of firewood:
Clinging to me just like a ghost should.

Family begs for complete removal,
The desertion of all disapproval:
A self-operation into no struggle.

The mocking sound of my own laughter;
In the darkness my heart beats louder and louder--
And I know I am my father's daughter.

Sugandha Mukherjee
English Department,
Second Year.

HOME!

Brick by brick,
With sweat and toil.
I built a shrine,
I named it “my home.”
A corner beside the hearth,
So warm, so tender,
Cradled me to the land of dreams.
Alas! The blanket of grey,
Wrapped the piece of heaven above
And spiralled down the golden thread.
So powerful, so devastating,
The slender thread of death.
The shrine I built could’ve shielded me,
It was mighty enough,
It was brave.
But all the colours seemed dull.
The roof crumbled and so did the walls.
I lay beneath the debris,
The broken bricks tore my flesh.
The scars that had healed,
Bled and only bled.
The fire still burns,
Amidst the pool of red,
And in “my home”,
I still remain.
I shall remain even if the rain defeats the flames,
I am immortal,
For ‘grief’ is my name.

Sugandha Mukherjee
English Department,
Second Year.

THE DEVIL

You,
You're like the first snow in winter.
A delicate, pristine and youthful presence.
A presence, so capable, that it defeats the dreadful, wrathful fire,
Blazing beneath my skin,
Through my blood,
Burning my organs,
Destroying my Eden,
Killing my Paradise.

You,
Your dark, illimitable and bewitching eyes.
Oh! I cannot look away,
Nor can I shut my eyes.
And a smile, so fatal, yet so heavenly,
It imprisons me with the chains of greed.
I desire, I crave, I worship you, the divine.
But you,
Your divinity is nothing but a mirage.
Behind your deceitful shadow,
You land on my skin to re-ignite the Hell fire.
The snow melts away,
My feet tremble on the molten lava.

Oh! You,
You're the Devil,
You slaughter every life in my Paradise,
You run through my throat like poison.
My eyes bleed,
I cannot look away nor can I shut them.
I fell in love with the Devil.
And now, my Eden is just a heap of ashes.
Eventually, ebbing into oblivion.

Sugandha Mukherjee
English Department,
Second Year.

CHASED BY SHADOWS: A REFLECTION

It's right behind, chasing me.
As hungry as a starving lion
Reeking of terror and madness.
A parasite,
An invincible monster,
An expanding blackhole.
It pours and sprinkles venom from the green sky above,
I run,
I run,
I keep running.
With needles piercing my feet
I beg my breath to not desert me.
Shelter, I look for,
Countless brick houses around ii
Yet, none have doors.
I shriek,
I scream,
Yet, none can hear me.
The scoundrel laughs,
The beggar weeps.
I extend my hand
Yet, none can touch me.
A group of young maidens walk past me
With pale and sullen visages
Yet, they can't see my bleeding feet, my burning skin.
It's right in front, approaching me.
The parasite,
The invincible monster,
The expanding blackhole.
I step forward
For it must be lonely.

It must be scared,
Distressed,
Begging to be caressed by death
As it fails to be noticed.
The reality is either us,
Or them,
Or maybe it's just me facing the mirror.
But what if it's one of Satan's dreams?

Zarin Ashia
English Department,
First Year.

SAFIAH, MUHABBAT STARTS WITH MEEM (م)

You knock on the door of a house which has forgotten it's own existence, it shrinks from your touch. Ceasing to exist, literally. It crumbles down leaving only it's stairs which lead to nowhere. Safiah, I tell you, that's what abandonment does to you.

You talk about your people, and the child that tries to write 'peace' in a language his dead mother used to speak. And they ask you why does your poetry bleed. Safiah, you tell me, of your people who spit red and scream.

You slur out the word, 'maut' (موت) (with so much rage, pursing your lips at the meem (م) swallowing your agony. You hollow your mouth at the vau (و) taking in breaths of coated misery. When you reach the letter ta (ت) you bring your tongue between your teeth, spitting out the heaviness sinking into your bones. Safiah, your spine cracks because it could only carry so much.

You tell me muhabbat start with a meem (م) and it is to be whispered softly with love, cautiously poured into palms that cup prayers for you. But I've always written that word with a daal (د), because that's how you begin his name. safiah, you tell me, no word of love starts with that letter except for (-د-) 'dard'.

And safiah, I tell you smiling, exactly.

Aishi Gangopadhyay
English Department,
First Year.

WHO IS A TEACHER?

A teacher is a Gift of God,
Who helps us survive against all conditions odd.
A teacher is like a ray of the Sun:
Illuminating our lives with lessons full of fun.
She is our precious guide;
A beautiful flower—whose fragrance spreads far and wide.
She is our Second Mother:
When she's with us there's nothing about which we need to bother.
Teachers, in the lives of students, are a blessing
And they are the strongest support we have before any examinations we are giving.

Shinjini Sarkar
Psychology Department,
Third Year.

FATEBOUND

Soumiti Das
English Department,
Second Year.

FESTIVITY

They hardly know what the street is called,
But they rejoice
An exhilarated crowd walking through, probably trampling over.
Neat folds of the new clothes-
Along the collar,
Along the hem.
A subtle smell in the air-
Of autumn, of joy, of smiles,
Of leftover sweets and freshly fried fritters.
They call it the smell of festivity.

Dazzling lights blinding them:
Red, white, blue and green
Along the road that leads to the God
Encased in marquees of marvels, motives and riches.
They look at each other,
Faces known yet nameless.

Drifting apart from the crowd she stands;
Her right hand clasped to that of her mother's,
The left, holding on to a wind wheel tightly:
Red, white, blue and green.
Her eyes speak of hunger but rejoices,
Her cloth of deprivation –
A long tear along the hem, blotches of dirt around the collar.

She smiles at them as they pass by,
Walking to where the good wins over the evil.
They hardly know what they call her ,
Nameless as she is.
A subtle smell in the air around her—
They call it the smell of festivity.
The wind wheel in her hand moves.

Shinjini Sarkar
Psychology Department,
Third Year.

UNKNOWN SAVIOUR

Come rain, come shine, he rises.
I am rendered small in his shadow.
I don't know what he thinks,
Face frozen in silver.
[Is it worth it, to save us from our own destruction?] Our enemies are only the harbingers of our ultimate fate.
Why then, does he fight them? Tirelessly?
I see the injury. Everyone sees the injury.
The rapid blinking, the insistent beeping.
Yet he ignores it.
Why?
[Are we worth saving?] Like a god come to rain down judgement from the heavens,
His light flashes and burns, cutting through air and invader alike.
A god does not belong in the world of mortals.
Neither as resident, nor as saviour.
A salvation so destructive we fear for our lives,
But our only salvation regardless.
[What have we given him in return?
Suspicion and hatred? The worship of adoring masses?] I wonder what he sees, when he looks down at us?
Innocents to be saved? Insects to be trampled?
[Or merely insignificant specks in the rippling fabric that is space-time?]

I wish he would leave forever – fly off as always and never return.

I wish he would shatter the ground with his landing every day.

I want to cheer when he rises up, higher than any building.

When he does, I hate him.

More than anything, I hate us, who can only stand by and be protected.

I want that light of his to go dark.

When it does, my vision blurs, my head swims. I feel sick.

He disappears into light, and no sun is strong enough for the coming darkness.

He drops down from the sky three hours later. Still blinking, still beeping.

An outsider fighting off other invaders.

[What have we done to deserve this?

Is our mere existence enough to call his attention, his protection?

To be watched over and kept safe by a divine being?]

Mortals can never know the inner workings of gods.

Their reasons, their rationale.

Nor their strength, or their power.

[Are we safe? Are we helpless? Should we be grateful or afraid?]

It doesn't matter what we think. Joyous or hateful. Regardless,

Come day, come night. He rises again.

Aishi Gangopadhyay
English Department,
First Year.

THE BLUE YOUTH

One lotus foot resting against the other
In a dancing posture,
Bright yellow robes shining in the sun
Stands the handsome Blue Youth,
Our beloved Krishna.
Sweet harmony of notes from his flute flows,
While in the cool breeze the feather in his crown blows;
All the girls of Vraj dance around Him in a trance.

The fairest beauty of Vrindavan is seen by His side:
Radha—as She is called, so graceful and mild,
Krishna's eternal consort, She is the epitome of mercy.

In contrast to this serenity
This same Blue Youth appears in the battlefield
Driving a chariot, guiding a valiant warrior
Telling him about life, showing him the truth of the universe in a divine mirror.
The Blue Youth of Vraj is now no longer a cowherd
But the King of Dwarka, Queen Rukmini's Lord.

How everything changes with time,
The playful boy in Mother Yashoda's yard
Is now the strongest ruler in Aryavarta.
The only things unchanged about Him are
His blue complexion, the lotus-like eyes, the beautiful face and the charming
smile.
He may now be a King of a Messiah
But to Radha, Yashoda and the entire Vraj
He's still their sweet Blue Youth, their very dear Kanhaiya.

Aishi Gangopadhyay
English Department,
First Year.

A QUESTION ABOUT WOMEN'S SAFETY

Dear Men,

What do you want from us?

We never cause you any trouble, then why bother us?

Is it unjust to ask for our safety?

Do you not understand that respecting fellow humans is your basic duty?

Stepping out of our houses alone or travelling alone in a cab,

Being there on the road even after sunset— all these constitute our fundamental right.

Then why the need for slogans, why do we need to fight,

For something which should be ensured to us without question?

You have a mother, a sister, a daughter and a female cousin,

So why can't you respect other women?

Oh, now don't come and blame our attire,

Because that is not the issue, the problem is your desire.

Remember that the one who brought you into existence is a woman,

And visualize her in others of her kind.

When men respect women, and women are able to trust men,

Only then will the earth be an ideal place to live; so to women's pains don't be blind.

Munazzah Shamim
English Department,
Second Year.

THE UNBINDING: A SYMPHONY OF SORROW AND FATE

In the cold embrace of iron bars,
Where shadows dance with creeping scars,
Lies the fate of men condemned,
By hands of others, their lives to end.

Fortunate, some might proclaim,
To perish not by their own name,
For in the afterlife's grand court,
They may plead for divine rapport.

But what of those who wield the knife,
Against the thread of their own life?
Who plunge the stake into their core,
And split themselves forevermore?

In the dark, they find no grace,
For God will not accept their case,
For in their act of self-despair,
They lose both hope and heaven's care.

Oh, pity them, the silent weep,
For God rejects them, flunking them in hell deep,
Nor will their souls find peace or rest,
In realms where only purest blessed.

Sympathy, I beg of thee,
For those like me, who seek to flee,
This mortal coil by their own hand,
In a sorrow none can understand.

Forgiveness from the heavens barred,

And self-redemption marred and scarred,
For we, who fall by our own guise,
Bear burdens none can eulogize.

Sangya Pal
English Department,
First Year.

A CONVERSATION WITH A BLACK DOG

I love you like your dogs: panting,
willing, waiting. Devoted?
Wild savagery: “untamed,”
but pure. I could yip.
I could take a bite out of you,
to know how you feel.

It's hard having your teeth
by my throat,
Air sharpened to form
the curve of your smile.

You don't bite a dog back,
you ask: ‘Why?’

[I get jealous of those
good dogs you got euthanized;
I too, want to die,
in a world where you love me.]

Munazzah Shamim
English Department,
Second Year.

THE SILENT EMANCIPATION

In the shadowed vale of existence, I ponder fate,
Where death, the ultimate enigma, patiently waits.
A paradox profound, a riddle enshrined,
In death's embrace, liberation aligned.

Death, the final remedy, the last refrain,
Promising release from suffering and pain.
Why, then, does it elude my desperate plea,
This key to my chains, my yearned-for decree?

In the prison of my sins, I languish confined,
Walls forged by remorse, regrets entwined.
Each misdeed a brick, each sorrow a stone,
In this penitentiary of my soul, alone.

Yet death holds the key, the door to the beyond,
A passage to realms where I might belong.
Freedom awaits in its silent embrace,
A tranquil escape from this wearisome chase.

Oh, death, why do you tarry, why do you delay?
In your quietude, I seek my final say.
To transcend the boundaries of mortal plight,
To dissolve in the vastness of the eternal night.

But until you come, I remain entrapped,
In this life's confines, my spirit enwrapped.
Still, I dream of that day, that moment serene,
When death unlocks the gates to the unseen.

In your shadow, I find solace, a silent plea,
For death is the answer, death means to be free.

Munazzah Shamim
English Department,
Second Year.

NOT A HAIKU

In the shadowed realm where darkness reigns,
There dwells a demon, bound by chains,
A creature of the night, so cold,
In the depths of despair, his soul unfolds.

Yet in this abyss of endless night,
There shines a beacon, pure and bright,
A light that guides him through the gloom,
A love that pierces the deepest tomb.

She is his light, his guiding star,
The one who sees beyond his scar,
In her eyes, he finds his redemption,
In her love, he finds his salvation.

Together they walk through the shadows deep,
Hand in hand, they defy the sleep,
Of death and darkness, they are not afraid,
For in each other's arms, their love is laid.

Though the world may tremble at their sight,
They are bound by love's eternal light,
For she is the light that guides his way,
And he is the demon who will never stray.

So let the world shudder and shake,
For in their love, they will not break,
For they are the masters of their fate,
Even in the darkest night, their love is great.

Rayana Roy
English Department,
Third Year.

BASEMENT SYMPHONY

Whatever I see dear
It starts with you, and ends with fleas
As I smell our rotting love,

The basement not a place for your rest,
Certainly not, for mine too
A cordial invitation of late guests
Owls, magpies as such
The centipede, a paid one
Who walks in on us
Bodies for bills
Receipts in chunks.
I smile knowingly,
My teeth yellowed,
A sight to your eyes
Whose dull ouvre
Hides a Crushed
tooth, tender
Kisses, and
A swollen
Neck.

The angel of death sings a lullaby,
The wedding song to herald
Our intertwined fate,
And hands, let's not forget,
The start of promises broken,
When you hit the door that day
To belittle me,
While I wept on your body
Who could not move to embrace mine.

The thunderous rage you had
Resounded no more,
Yet, my lonesome thoughts wailed for
The death of my nightingale
Who does not grace her eyes on me,
With blinks of mortal love.

So I picked my own body,
Heaped the punishment in your hands
Held in mine,
And judged to a silent longing.
This is how we end
You and I,
Second chances denied,
Close together in every sight.

BIRTH OF A DAY

There is a loss, a grief, a bereavement in the start of this wonderous journey
One thinks that life is more fortunate to the careless than the careful
The careless do not dream of their anger or their sadness but rather they get a mouthful of sleep
Indulged in like gulps of air, they sleep how they breathe
The careless do not move and do not think about the breaches of the world
The First Day did not shower the same love on every flower
They stood on top of the largest hill, bent on their toes
Thought about the Birth, that makes streams flow and the anger that makes a storm dance.
The First Day still whistles an old lover's tune
That the birth of a new day is covered in anger
I, a refuge, make notes, and stand apart like a secret visitor.
They run away from the birth that would gorge upon itself
Taking chunks of their own hand, sew clumsily the end parts of them to another section
The clinic sounds to be silent and the birthing reminds one of the abortions in Palestine,
Where there is no mercy or help, only needles poking through one part of the body to go to another,
Futilely, trying to salvage a carpentry of the body.
The limbs are chopped off in shades of purple, red flows through them,
From one fingertip to another it covers the area, drips down, magenta hues caressing a hand.
Mixing in a wishful thinking of the body, praying that 'Here comes sleep to me, sleep would come'
'Before this face gets severed, one would falsify their peace, and throw up the tethered womb'.
Suddenly there is no more an anger of the birth, of the coupling that leaves it severed,
A brokenness that is deathly and wrong.
Here they hold a Sun in their palm and pretends to like the child, the body,
The body which changes its bones, sheds skin and molds itself to liking.
The midwives of Chaos forces a pitiful glance, holding the shrieking child, and ripping its tongue apart.

The First Day whistles a lover's tune, wisps of air billowing to signal the clouds,
That lives are stalling, anger a forgetful dream,
Has called for its raven on the writer's door.

Reeti Ghosh
Economics Department,
Third Year.

GRATITUDE

The time has come to take a flight
And leave these well-worn banks
So, I would like to take my time
And say my heartfelt Thanks.

Thanks to the days that taught me
To find joy in simple things;
That even when life gives you lemons
You can bake the sweetest things!

Thanks to the wars waged on my land
They taught me to be kind;
Told me that the greatest power
Is to have the calmest mind.

Thanks to all the friends I lost
And to the ones I never gained.
You taught me to always cherish those
Who love me all the same.

Thanks to all the countless things
That brought along the dark;
They taught me to hold on to faith
And find the light in art!

Thanks to all the heartbreaks
And all the shrouded crimes;
They gifted me my strongest voice
The power of a rhyme!

Now, you must be wondering,
Why my words are cast in grey?
"It's the final rendition
Has she nothing good to say?"

But don't you find it funny,
That every day in life,
We thank the smiles, and the joy,
Never those who make them thrive?

For who would ever value joy
If there were no sorrow?
Everybody loves a smile
When tears await tomorrow!

That is why I take my time
To thank the dismal fates;
For setting ablaze the burning road
That leads to brighter days!

And now, all that is left to be said
Of this story I tell:
A tree whose Branches brush the Heavens
Has its Roots in Hell.