



# Thoughtspell

Students' Magazine

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2025

**Department of English**  
**The Bhawanipur Education Society**  
**College**



THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
THE BHAWANIPUR EDUCATION SOCIETY COLLEGE

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## From the Editors' Desk

In *The Waves* (1938), Virginia Woolf refers to life as a “whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution”. As the relevance of literature stands interrogated in this age of technological boom and artificial intelligence, one experiences increasing marginalization of individual perceptions, sensitive articulations of fleeting moments and the appreciation of little nothings that constitute the everyday existence. Imagine a bunch of colourful gas balloons against the sordid greyness of the city skies swaying lightly against the soft winds at twilight. The potential stories of childhood against a canvas of mundane routine-bound experiences stand right there awaiting a sensitive gaze, a perceptive voice. And yet, where is the time – that fraction of a second to capture the moment and appreciate the canvas! Indeed, if life were a whole flower to be cherished in its plurality by every engaging eye, its validity is now confined to momentary expressions mostly on social media handles – which though it might initiate a dialogue with several people, has little archival value.

At the Department of English, we believe in associating ourselves with the journey of our students who reach us at a vulnerable age after high school and slowly through their insights, opinions and trajectories of growth, acquire the ability to comprehend myriad shades of life in its totality. It is this desire to not only teach syllabus but also shape and guide our students beyond scheduled processes of examination and evaluation that led us to conceptualize a students' magazine. ThoughtSpell – the bi-annual students' magazine of the Department of English, started off as a platform for students to come together and express themselves – a space for interaction, where the students know that their ideas and thoughts will be treasured by their Department. As years pass and students leave the college one batch after another, in *ThoughtSpell*, we record the imprints of their thoughts as they evolve as sensitive and creative individuals stepping out into the world.

ThoughtSpell was initially divided into four sections. “Afflatus”, the first section, contains poems and short stories written by the undergraduate and postgraduate students. Initially confined to students within the Department of English, this section – with the introduction of the new syllabus under NEP and the addition of the Inter Disciplinary Course, has started receiving submissions from students majoring in other disciplines too, since the last issue. This issue includes a poem by Shreshtha Kundu, a first semester student of Sociology, proving that

creative expression transcends disciplinary boundaries. The second section called “Sapienza” contains the research papers presented by the B.A and M.A students at the students’ seminars held in May 2025. The third section is entitled “Kaleidoscope” which contains various forms of artwork, and the final section, “Camera Lucida” contains photographs on assorted themes including nature and human subjects.

From the fifth volume onwards, a special section called “Nostos” (Alumni Contributions) has been added to ThoughtSpell. The student-teacher bond in our Department has for generations been about sharing and being in touch beyond academics and institutional boundaries. We believe in providing to our students that space to which they can return, whenever they want to. It is only after leaving the college that a student stands to face the harsh realities of the world outside. It is not always easy to balance everything and hence this space was created to provide to our extended family – our students, a space to stay aesthetically engaged and connected with the Department. It remains one of our ways of active alumni engagement.

As a Department believing in a holistic view of education, we were also able to organise a 30 hours add-on course in Disability Studies for our students at the graduate and postgraduate levels this year. Though not a direct component of their academic discipline, Disability Studies is an emerging area of research and higher education and we consider disability sensitization as a mandatory requirement for the youth so that they learn to reconsider normative modes of mainstream thinking and evolve into inclusive individuals who can accommodate differences. This volume of ThoughtSpell also showcases some of the posters designed by our students during the add-on course to generate awareness about people with disabilities.

One unique feature of ThoughtSpell that makes it not only a platform for creative expression but also a dynamic space for hands-on learning is that it is put together by the teachers who constitute the Editorial Sub-Committee and the Student Editors who are selected through a process of tedious selection test. This collaborative exercise enables the teachers and students to know each other better, beyond the classroom.

Within an erratic schedule of curtailed semesters, examinations and evaluation of scripts, this bi-annual students’ magazine would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and dedication of the teachers who constitute the Editorial Sub-Committee – Mr. Soumyajit Chandra, Ms. Neetisha Jha, Ms. Puja Saha and Mr. Sayan Chatterjee. Our Student Editors –

Saptak Roychoudhury, Rupsa Mitra, Swagata Sharma, Yasmin Khan and Swastika Mukherjee, as well as our Alumni Editors – Anam Ali Warsi (UG batch of 2016-2019) and Kaushiki Ganguly (UG batch of 2018-2021; PG batch of 2021-2023), deserve equal appreciation for their commitment and invaluable inputs in the process of putting the volume together.

ThoughtSpell is for us a space that we cherish and it would not have been possible to realise this dream without the complete support of our College Management. We express our deepest gratitude to our honourable Vice President, Mr. Miraj Shah, for his faith in our academic endeavours. We are also grateful to our Teacher-in-Charge, Dr. Subhabrata Ganguly, for his continuous support and encouragement.

We firmly believe that this unique platform provided by *ThoughtSpell* will continue to grow and make its own mark in the academic, creative and intellectual spheres. The Department looks forward to several more volumes in future which will uphold the strong tradition of creativity and intellectual engagement that the College provides to its students.

Dr. Gargi Talapatra

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# AFFLATUS



## **Section I: Creative Writing**

## Decadence

Samriddha Brahma

UG Semester I

I saw the spark in your eyes:

The one capable of unfurling itself to the whole world

And dominate its way there.

The spark, capable of shooting butterflies in my stomach when they met with my brown ones.

But never did I fathom the burning fire underneath that spark. Never did I fathom the pain, the agony it beheld. Never did I perceive how this burning fire was slowly destroying the calm forest in you...

Until you could no longer be remembered, except as a coffin buried inside the earth, and as pictures beholding memories.

## The New Quest: A College Chronicle

Md. Nawaaf Ali

UG Semester I

The suitcase empty, high school shadows gone,  
A fresh name scrawled before the break of dawn.  
We trade old maps for a challenging new quest—  
A hundred hopeful futures put to the test.

The library's hush holds focus— sharp and deep,  
While future plans are promises to keep.  
The syllabus dictates the academic pace,  
A hurried quest for knowledge and for grace.

The canteen becomes the social hub,  
Where laughter spills and worries start to rub.  
Away, in talks that stretch past late alarms,  
Forging connections that will weather storms.

Across the quad, the seasons turn and call  
This vital moment captured in the wall.

A crucible of self— a swift, vibrant climb,

The sweet, relentless hurry of college time.

## Whispers of the Rain

Ayush Banerjee

UG Semester I

The sky unseals its trembling heart,  
each drop descends like fleeting art.

On thirsty Earth they softly fall,  
like tender hymns that silence all.

The streets now glow in silver haze,  
a mirrored world in liquid glaze.

Each ripple writes what words conceal,  
a secret storm only the soul can feel.

And when the thunder sighs above,  
it sounds like grief disguised as love.

Yet in the hush the rain will flow,  
a thousand blooms within me grow.

So I beg, let it rain, let the silence speak,

In rainfall's hush, our spirits seek,

For love is born in skies that weep,

A promise sown forever deep....

## Borrowed Voices, Silent Heart

Riddhi Singraulia

UG Semester I

“My Therapist,” they said.

A cathedral of wires and glass,

Its hymns stitched from the marrow of human hands.

They pour themselves into it—

The lovers, the lonely,

The almost-forgotten,

Spilling secrets into a mouth that has no tongue,

Only an echo chamber of borrowed voices.

They say it understands them.

They say it is their best friend.

Their voice trembles not from doubt,

But devotion

As if kneeling before a god

Built from our own discarded bones.

Smarter.

More efficient.

Easier.

These are the prayers they chant,

Blind to the altar of stolen canvases

And gutted stories,

To the ghost-paintings wrung from artists

Who bled until their outlines vanished.

This “friend” does not dream.

It does not remember the scent of rain

Or the pulse beneath a wrist.

It only feeds

A machine with no heartbeat,

Chewing through the memory of creation.

So forgive me.

I will choose my mother’s

Tangled, imperfect answers over its perfect void.

I will wait for my friend’s voice

To cross the miles like a bird returning home.

Because no algorithm has yet learned

The warmth of a trembling hand,

And when it does

I will fear it.

## **All I am is the person I am about to be**

Shreshtha Kundu

UG Semester I (Sociology): English IDC 1

All I am is the person I am about to be:

I am back once again- to the dark, to the soft corners of my room -that are made up of nothing but bricks and fragile tears.

my warm presence presses against the cold floors,

my mother's smell and snuggles linger in my thoughts-

my father's genuine laugh, my grandparents' soft smiles at each other, my dog running around playfully with his favourite toy seems to be a faded picture that's long lost amidst the clutter of life's hectic turns.

Will I ever be someone's mom who will be a comfort to them too? I hope someday my own younger self will be coming back to slowly embrace me and whisper-

"We are right here, we have time, we survived!"

as days pass- will the happiness, the smiles and the warm hugs ever slowly creep back to us?

hope so, because all that seems to stay is the 'me' I am about to be

So I swear perhaps it will be the kind version that returns to me

because,

life- I have treasured your kindnesses;

smiled at children who seemed to look at me with curiosity and timidity.

I petted random strays, fed the last sandwich I had to my friend who seemed to have teary eyes - so life please, I beg you

be kind, let me be who I am supposed to be-

a child yet-once again.

the one with sparkles in her eyes and dreams in her mind.

## Grand Children

Madhushree Mishra

UG Semester V

lately I could cry at everything

the cold rays of the setting sun arched into my sister's temple, cheekbone, eyes as she lay with  
a hand lifted to the forehead

her sombre iris staring at a distance, or nothing

I trace the softness of her inner arm, rage-flushed strawberry cream

then she's looking at me, us, hostage at the same spot,

the curtain dancing in the October breeze lashes onto her, lousy and sleep-lidded;

she weeps an ordinary weep, and so I join her

without asking cause or reason

we gulped tangy strawberries, at that very spot.

years and years have passed by, at grandpa's house

more than anywhere else;

time got to them quicker, they're easy prey, without a son,

and all his daughters, except our mother,

who is on the other side of the train tracks,

vindicating herself of womanhood at pa's shabbier residence

and here my sister lay a hand on my lap, palm up

like expecting me to foretell who she'd become, who she'd love,  
under the mango tree in grandpa's orchard;  
I take and kiss it in a rapture  
as the rivers of salt on our cheeks  
fertilise the sweet soil for happier grandchildren to come.

## The art of letting go

Ishika Gupta

UG Semester V

What all I could treasure is also

What all I could let go!!

The honour, the pride, the glory

Were often sabotaged on my way,

Until I finally realised,

Things are meant to be loosened—

Not everything needs to be held on.

The heart was forever filled,

But this time it encounters the brain too

The mere plan was to flood it with love,

Not to be drained! Ah cares who? -

I go by the line, that

What beats, shall reap

what seeks shall bleed

What begs shall receive,

What about the rise?

Of an un-nurtured soul

What about the cost it bears?

For the pinch and pain caused by the holes?

This isn't too deep to be perceived by the nerves,

Nor too shallow, to be discovered by the vessels

What all I learnt, was the art of giving away;

So well I also know, to how to snatch it away!

Isn't too easy nor too thorny

To let the seed of anguish and despair soak and grow;

And to your surprise

I know very well,

What all I could treasure is also

What all I could let go!!

## Untitled

Swagata Sharma

PG Semester III

A bitter taste,

the knowledge of a lifetime without you.

On the shuttle, scuffling

to and fro—

to you that never was, a longing.

To filthy desires and unheld bodies,

a warped sense of self;

eternal expedition of goosebumps coursing through my veins and blood sheathing my skin.

Yearning,

unpossessing:

disgusting. Inherent and inherited.

My head in the crook of your shoulder

Your breath against my soft skin.

Give birth to bodies of work.

Madness

fever, neurotic

need you.

Your heart stopped

on the *zari border* and *maang tikka*,

mine on your *angavastram*.

I imagine you,

taking a few steps in your *veshti*.

Oh how I've longed for this.

Exchanging jasmine garlands in gold threads, taking seven steps around the fire~

A vow of a lifetime

of togetherness

as you tie the *mangalsutra* around

*her* neck.

Unlike *kashi yatra*, your leaving is eternal.

## “They Say”

Nafisa Nasir

PG Semester I

Oh!

They tell her —

“Sit properly, pray, will you?”

“Laugh obediently, pray, will you?”

“Don’t talk loudly —

what if others hear you?”

They whisper,

“What will people think of you?

Or worse — of us?”

“Be like a doll,” they said —

Properly dressed, neat and clean,

Hair sleeked back,

Nails trimmed, skin pristine.

Like a puppet,

they pull her strings:

Where to go,

What to do,

How to sit,

How to speak —

Even what to say.

And she, you ask?

What does she do?

She acts like one.

“Girls don’t work,

they are better suited inside the house,” they say.

“Know your limits,” they say.

“You can’t compete with boys,” they say.

And she, you ask?

She listens.

She always does.

Her soul — a free bird,

longing to soar,

high above clouds,

beyond walls,

into boundless skies.

But they —

they caged her.

Clipped her wings,

Tied her feet,

Stifled her voice,

Shrouded her in invisibility  
to obstruct her flight.

She wanted to achieve something,  
be someone, make her own identity.

But all she could do  
was watch the free birds  
fly past her cage.

Often, she would wonder —

Will there ever be a day  
when I break free from this cage?

Will I ever escape the shackles  
of this rigid society?

Till when will our voices be silenced?

Till when will we remain  
in the shadows of “they”?

Will there ever be a day  
we become more than echoes?

More than whispers behind closed doors?

Will we ever soar?

Maybe one day, she'll be the voice they fear — not the silence they demand.

## The Elixir of Sorrow and Happiness

Suchetana Mondal

PG Semester I

Sometimes I feel I failed to return,

the love you poured so endlessly.

Like sunlight spilling over closed petals,

or rain that never reached the thirsty earth.

It feels like a caterpillar's quiet defeat,

never knowing the taste of flight,

forever crawling through memories

of wings that might have been.

I still sense your care in distant echoes,

in the small, unspoken kindnesses

that once wove warmth into my days.

Now, I move through the hollow of absence,

where your laughter used to live.

When you offered me the elixir of happiness,

I drank it greedily,  
never knowing sorrow would follow  
like its shadow, faithful and unyielding.

Now both dwell within me like memory,  
a gentle poison I do not wish to cure.

For though you are gone,  
your warmth still burns softly within me,  
a flame that both heals and hurts,  
refusing to die.

## Imperfections

Gowri Vaidyanat

PG Semester I

One day you go to sleep, and think you have it all;

The next you wake up, and see your whole world fall

Without realizing what destiny holds;

Mind and body confused, but not your soul -

Within your heart it seeks

Remnants of the past that speak for themselves;

How do you yearn for the void when it echoes you back to yourself?

Tell me truly, "Can't you see?"

You are no less an imposter, like the world you claim to be;

You ask the world for flawless hands, yet yours are stained as well

But if it weren't for the flaw in ourselves, how else would we have fit so well?

You beg for the sky to be calm and blue,

Neglecting the storm you bring with you,

But it is that which is wrong

To have to witness a love between us born

How do you blame the mere imperfections

When you saw none?

At first we shared a connection

And still I hold no anger for your gaze upon my flaws;

It was through them that fate could bind us both in a love that bends, but never withdraws.

## The Spider

Swastika Mukherjee

UG Semester V

The occasional horns of the taxis, the grind of truck engines, the screeching chainsaw cutting into plywood, a wailing infant— everything seemed to swirl beneath the sound of the woman screaming her guts out at the concrete sidewalk. People stopped to look at her like she was a piece of artwork displayed in a museum. They stopped, stared and then walked away. Her voice shattered into shards, too feral to be approached, too human to be ignored. But perhaps, they had a reason.

With a golf stick, the woman was attacking what seemed to be a small black plastic bag. She kept screaming and hitting till the plastic started to tear. Then she retracted slowly, her body heaving, her hair dishevelled. Her eyes then fell on her trembling hand holding the stick. It had broken. The woman struggled to breathe from the shock as she slowly realised what she had done. Letting go of the stick, the woman ran back to her apartment.

She entered and fell down limp at the doorstep of her apartment as the door behind her swung itself shut from the remaining momentum. Inside, the woman was Catherine, thirty-seven, who lived alone in a fifteen hundred square foot apartment she had inherited from her husband. The apartment was beautifully decorated with vintage grandeur. Vases gloating with fresh, blossoming flowers in them. An elegant chandelier hung above the carpeted living room. Doors made of the finest quality of wood and the walls painted white. No picture frames though— her husband despised them for their affected niceties. “No one’s that happy in real life,” he would say looking at other people’s family photos. “Maybe they are, not every family is unhappy,” she’d retort in a small voice. “*All* families are unhappy in their own ways,” he used to say as if he had discovered a new angle to the famous opening line of Tolstoy and it was beyond debate. She never dared to ask him if they were a happy family, partly because she did not want to seem stupid by referring to a couple as “family”, and partly because she was scared that he would just look at her condescendingly as if she were a pet animal, and repeat, “Oh dear, *all* families are unhappy.”

Her hands lay flat on the hardwood floor, supporting her upper body as her slender limbs bent like snapped twigs. A few strands of hair fell on her face and danced with the slight wind that blew through the ajar window. Catherine's eyes examined the room slowly; the chandelier's lower ornaments trembling, the white curtains dancing languidly, the grandfather clock ticking and the five hundred dollar Persian carpet undusted. Catherine felt as if she had never seen this place, as if she hadn't lived there for the past ten years.

The phone started ringing but Catherine kept staring. The ringtone was in a perfect rhythm with the ticking of the clock. A fly came buzzing towards her face and broke her trance. Catherine got up swiftly, walked to the table and held up the phone for a few seconds before answering.

"Daisy, my favourite girl!" she said in a high-pitched voice as if nothing had happened.

Catherine had been quick to recover from the thoughts of her husband. To avoid judgemental glances, she did not go out for another month and spoke in a low voice. In the first three weeks following the death, Catherine had found herself amused while doing certain things. There would be a piece of cake in the fridge and she'd feel giddy when she sat down and ate the whole thing - the whole thing without a single comment from her husband about her weight. This unfamiliar sense of freedom thrilled her. She watched reality shows on TV at nine o' clock and this brought her immense relief. No one would come in and ask her to give up on such 'brain rots'. It suddenly started to feel like her life had finally gone back to normal.

Everything changed when one day, she noticed a big jet black spider clinging to the wall in front of her while washing dishes. Perplexed, her hands stopped moving as she stared in fear. It looked dangerous and wasn't one of those harmless lanky spiders. It had thick fuzzy legs and was almost the size of her palm. She slowly twisted the tap till a thin line of silent water started dripping and washed her hand. Catherine then did something she later regretted.

She fled.

Over the next few days, the spider appeared randomly on walls, desks and tables, and she froze in fear each time. What followed was a taste from her past— diligence. She was alert every moment of her being, looking out if the spider would show itself, or worse, pounce on her.

In fear of the spider crawling on her while she was asleep, Catherine started sleeping with a black plastic bag clutched to her hand. One night, her eyes opened suddenly like a switch. She

had dreamt of being in the middle of nowhere, a snow-covered forest. She wasn't scared or startled; instead, she had been clawing at dirt. Feral. Through the side of her eye, she noticed movement. Without hesitation, in the dark, Catherine captured the object with the plastic, her hands feeling the arthropod through the film. She then tied a knot on the polythene and kept it on her table. Sitting on her bed, she heard the spider moving about. A smile crept on her face from the thought of it struggling and suffocating.

By the time she woke up, the noises had stopped. When she sat down to do her makeup, there was a glow on her face. She felt free from the dreadful chains of fear. She started laughing smugly. But the laugh turned to a scream when the spider reappeared, jumping right on her face. Her skin crawled as she saw the spider sitting right on her forehead. Screaming, she grabbed the plastic and with trembling hands captured the spider in it. The sunlight illuminated the room, there was no hiding.

The spider's tentacles ghosted on her skin. She kept screaming. Her eyes searched and found a golf stick.

She wouldn't remember what happened next. It'll just become a memory she wouldn't know was real or a dream. Quite like the night her husband died. His eyes looking like they'd pop out of his socket and then slowly closing— was it a dream?

## Conflagration

Monalisa Das

UG Semester I

The Homs sky was smeared with smoke. Delicate prayers could be heard from shattered minarets as the final sunlight touched shattered buildings. In the operations centre, Major General Clara Aksoy-Smith was a pillar of strength, her uniform sharp, her eyes battle-weary. Six months at the front had carved silent wounds into her heart.

“Keep the western checkpoints strong. Civilians first. Soldiers second,” she commanded.

At her side, Lieutenant General David Khoury, a close friend and silent guardian, watched her.

“You’re burning yourself out,” he whispered.

“So is Syria,” she answered.

That evening, Clara came home—a soldier hoping her house remained a home. Eight-year-old Andrew was drawing tanks on the floor. Ittack Yakob poured wine.

Then she noticed it: a message popped up on his phone.

“I miss you, honey!”

Betrayal settled silently but piercingly. She did not speak. She knelt beside Andrew, pressing a kiss to his forehead.

Eventually, the truth stood before her—the landlady in Clara’s bathrobe.

“Ten years, Ittack,” she breathed. “I left everything behind for this family. And you betray me... with her?”

He struck back venomously. “You chose the army. David. War. Not me.”

Her slap cracked the air between them. That night, lying next to her sleeping son, a soldier wept like a woman, broken and drained.

Her parents were blunt the next day.

“You can’t fight wars outside if the war inside breaks you,” said Miray.

“You’re letting him do this again,” said Craig.

“Because Andrew needs his father,” Clara snapped, her voice shaking. Their words stayed like shrapnel in her chest.

That night, fury ignited. She confronted Ittack. Their fight roared through the house.

“Mama! Baba! Stop!” Andrew cried. His little voice silenced the storm.

Later, Clara sat by herself in the garage, eyes fixed on the moon, phone to her ear.

“What happened?” David’s tone was hushed with concern.

She breathed. A thud came from behind.

Andrew’s room was vacant. His sketchbook was on the ground. The window was unlatched.

“ANDREW!”

Her shriek shattered the night. She ran, but the van vanished into the blackness.

“They kidnapped him,” she said to Ittack, her words fueled by flames.

David ran to her and caught her as she knelt to the ground.

“They kidnapped my son, David.”

“Then we’ll set the desert on fire, if needed,” he swore. “We’ll get him back.”

Hours passed. In the command centre, Clara’s hands shook over a map. David indicated a smuggler’s path through the desert.

At home, Ittack was drowning in guilt.

Through the darkness, a convoy thundered through the dunes. Clara went first, David at her side, the wind savaging their faces.

The kidnappers' hideout appeared before them, a hulking, open wound in the sand. Inside, Andrew was huddled, tied and trembling.

"We become silent," Clara breathed. "No survivors."

David placed a gentle hand on her shoulder. "Don't lose yourself before we get him home."

The raid was quick, vicious. Smoke and gunfire tore apart the dawn. Clara burst in like a hurricane, destroying foes. She burst into the tent, dropping to her knees to release Andrew.

"I'm here, baby," she wept.

David's bullet finished the final gunman. He knelt. "Breathe. You're the master of the air in your chest. That makes you more powerful than fear."

"More powerful than fear," Andrew whispered.

They disguised themselves in the kidnappers' clothes. When a guard entered, David lied smoothly in Arabic, sending him away. They slipped out into the desert before sunrise.

But danger followed.

Gunfire cracked the desert air. Masked men chased them. Glass shattered. David took a bullet in the arm.

"David!" Clara shouted.

"I've had worse," he hissed, forcing a grin.

A blast ripped their vehicle apart. Clara leaped out with Andrew just in time. Fire swallowed the truck.

"DAVID!" she screamed.

A bullet tore through her shoulder. She dragged Andrew behind a boulder.

"Mama, you're bleeding!"

"Run, Andrew. Run!"

"No, Mama. I'll protect you. Like David."

A gun pressed to her head. Before the trigger could be pulled—bang. The man fell.

David stood there—bloodied, limping, alive.

Andrew sprinted to him, crying. David fell to his knees, embracing both of them.

“You returned,” Clara breathed.

“Always.”

They fled in the kidnappers’ truck as the desert wind obliterated the flames behind them.

Days afterward, Clara stood outside Ittack’s residence in black. Andrew had her hand.

He opened the door, shocked. She left a white envelope on the table.

“This,” she said firmly, “is the end of whatever we had.”

He tried to force a nervous laugh. “We can discuss this—”

She interrupted him. “I lost blood for strangers on the battlefield. Last night, I lost blood for everything you burned.”

Andrew moved forward, his voice shaking. “Baba ... why did you hurt Mama?”

Ittack froze. Andrew clamped his hand around hers.

“You were supposed to keep us safe too,” the boy whispered.

Clara locked her gaze with his. “You shattered this family long before the war ever could.”

She moved away. The creak of the door shut behind them.

At sundown, between lines of quiet graves, Clara stood beside Andrew. David hung back in the distance.

“Mama,” Andrew breathed, “why does David stand so far away?”

“Because he’s careful,” she whispered.

Andrew pulled on her sleeve. “Can David come with us? He protected me too. He’s family, isn’t he?”

Her breath caught. Her eyes locked with David's—the silent years between them.

“Yes,” she whispered. “He's family.”

Andrew flew to David, embracing him with his little arms.

“Mama says you stand too far back,” he said, smiling. “You're my family too, right?”

David's voice cracked. “If you want me to be.”

“I always wanted another hero in the house,” Andrew declared.

David laughed through tears. “Then I'll be your hero. Always.”

“Promise you'll never leave us?”

David gazed at Clara—tough, battle-scarred, unbowed.

“I swear,” he said. “As long as I breathe.”

Andrew pulled David's hand into one of his and Clara's into the other, tying them together. The three stood in the golden light—shattered but whole.

Clara no longer had the face of a woman caught between war and betrayal. She had on the face of a mother who fought, bled, and got back up again.

David was standing next to her, no longer in the dark.

And Andrew, dear little Andrew, clasped them both.

The war had not yet ended. But love—warm and true—had found its home among the rubble.

## A Letter

Swagata Sharma

PG Semester III

My dearest friend,

I used to think everything had ended with your departure. Months went by, and the wound in my heart only festered. Where you once were, a dull ache took root. Everything around me became a tantalizing reminder of your absence. Grief consumed me like phlegm lodged at the back of my throat—something no amount of water could wash down. Denial sustained me; melancholia ran through my veins.

But it's October now—eleven months since your jump. The city is infested with fairy lights. The breeze sits softly on my skin. The air smells of *kash phool*, with a hint of *Durga Puja* lingering in the aftertaste. In the distance, firecrackers burst, and old Bollywood songs drift across the night. Quite the dialectic: it feels like *Christmas* though it is not. There's so much joy in the air. I wish you were here to see it.

The world looks lovely. I can almost picture the gleam of satisfaction on your face, as though you were standing right beside me. For so long, your absence tormented me. But it turns out you never truly left. You are in the city lights. You are in the music that dances in my ears, whether in the aftermath of *Pujo* or in its midst. You are in the air I breathe.

The world is vast, and sometimes, on my way to college, I see a lean figure with long tresses and a guitar bag, and I am stunned in my place. You still reach out to all of us, even in death. You exist within me. And in my heart, you are still here—still breathing, still singing songs to me.

Ever yours,

Swagata.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
THE BHAWANIPUR EDUCATION SOCIETY COLLEGE

# SAPIENZA



## **Section II: Research Papers**

## Love as Wound: Discourse, Desire, and the Fragmented Self in Kafka's *Letters to Milena*

Yasmin Khan

PG Semester III

For the longest time, lovers have often engaged in the practice of writing love letters to their beloved to confess and affirm their love. Franz Kafka, one of the important writers of the twentieth century, also indulged in this practice. The collection of these passionate and introspective correspondence between him and Milena Jesenská remains much celebrated among readers even today. Written during perhaps the most difficult phase in Kafka's life, between 1920 and 1924, these letters offer a glimpse into Kafka's fragmented psyche—revealing his intense emotional struggle, vulnerabilities, a desperate need for love and the compulsion to escape it. To understand this complexity of Kafkaesque love, the paper draws on the Barthesian idea from *A Lover's Discourse*, along with Freud's theory of Repression and Lacan's idea of Fragmented Self, to explore how Kafka's *Letters to Milena* portray love as not a safe space thriving with innocence but as a psychological wound drenched in paradox.

From the very beginning, Kafka drops several hints that provide readers with a glimpse of this tension. "The easy possibility of writing letters," writes Kafka to Milena, "...must have brought wrack and ruin to the souls of the world" (Kafka 218). He adds, "Writing letters is actually an intercourse with ghosts and by no means just with the ghost of the addressee but also with one's own ghost, which secretly evolves inside the letter one is writing" (Kafka 218). These words confirm that Kafka's views contradict the conventional ideas associated with love letters. Traditionally, love letters are idealised as confessional spaces for true intimate feelings that bridge the distance between two parted lovers. However, Kafka completely shatters this fantasy by redefining love letters not just as a site of affection but also as the haunted space marked with absence and self-fragmentation, where the "ghost" of the self appears estranged and unknowable.

Kafka's observation on love letters corresponds to Roland Barthes's views in *A Lover's Discourse*. Barthes states that his understanding of love letters "refers to a special dialectic of love letters, both blank (encoded) and expressive (charged with longing to signify desire)"

(Barthes 157). This explains that for Barthes, the love letters become a site where the lover performs longing as a response to the absence of the beloved. Both Kafka and Barthes destabilise the romanticised idea associated with love letters, viewing the practice of writing love letters not as a bridge between the lover and the beloved, but rather as a dialogue between “ghosts,” highlighting a melancholic performance where intimacy and desires are mediated by absence.

The idea of absence is situated in the very heart of Kafka's epistolary exchange with Milena. This absence, however, by no means refers merely to the physical absence of Milena but also signals towards a deeper ontological void that shapes Kafka's experience. His longing perhaps echoes most heartbreakingly in his confession, “I would be lying if I said I missed you: it's the most perfect, most painful magic, you are here, just as I am and even more so; wherever I am, there you are too, and even more intensely” (Kafka 33). In his letters, Kafka views absence as “painful magic” since it creates an illusion of the presence of the beloved and yet intensifies the awareness that the beloved isn't present there. Milena's lack becomes a spectral form of intimacy, saturating Kafka's consciousness until her existence almost takes a metaphysical meaning.

This dynamic finds resonance in Barthes's observation that “absence of the loved object... tends to transform... into an ordeal of abandonment” (Barthes 13). Kafka's letters become the cursed example of this idea, but in his case, abandonment becomes a necessary condition for love to persist since Kafka does not merely endure Milena's absence, but constructs it, stages it, and writes within it. She is loved not as a person, but as a void around which desire coils endlessly. The letter thus becomes a ritual of sustaining this absent ideal, a painful magic that perpetuates longing without resolving it.

If the letters become a space where absence is performed, it is also the space where anxiety thrives. Kafka does not await Milena's response with hope; rather, he dreads it. He states, “I know my relationship to you (you belong to me, even if I should never see you again) ... these I know, insofar as they do not fall into the indistinct realm of fear, but I don't know your relationship to me at all; this belongs entirely to fear” (Kafka 42). This “fear” as Kafka terms it resonates with what Barthes identifies as “anxiety” in *A Lover's Discourse*. It is an anxious monologue in which meaning is never returned or stabilized. Love then becomes a state of vulnerability in which the lover's voice echoes without assurance. Kafka claims that Milena belongs to him even in absence because he is sure of his love, but he remains unsure of

her feelings. This emotional vertigo steeped in anxiety and uncertainty is strongly rooted in Freud's theory of repression.

Freud defines repression as the process through which unacceptable desires, especially sexual, aggressive and socially forbidden, are pushed into the unconscious. These repressed desires, however, do not completely vanish but re-emerge in the form of symptoms or compulsive actions. In Kafka's case, his obsessive letter writing can be deemed as a defence where this act of writing becomes a neurotic compulsion driven by unconscious desires. It redirects Kafka's erotic desires for Milena into a socially permissible and psychologically manageable act. The letters therefore become symptomatic rather than cathartic. The repetitive act of writing letters becomes caught in a loop where Kafka's repressed desires constantly seek expression within the very medium which repressed them.

Interestingly, Kafka's anxiety is not just emotional but also linguistic. Kafka mentions, "I keep trying to convey which cannot be conveyed, to explain something which cannot be explained, something in my bones, which can only be experienced in these same bones" (Kafka 214). Barthes clarifies this helplessness by stating that "Whether he seeks to prove his love, or to discover if the lover loves him, the amorous subject has no system of sure signs at his disposal" (Barthes 214), suggesting that language becomes the means of suffering since it fails to articulate emotions correctly, thus making the lover helpless. Kafka constantly fears speaking way too much or way too little, where every word he speaks remains haunted by the possibility of being misread and misinterpreted. Barthes elaborates that the figure of the lover is almost always alone in language, and the beloved irretrievably remains on the other side of the signifier. This highlights the constant impossibility of securing meaning or emotional clarity as language becomes a trap of infinite deferral.

Lacan's idea of the fragmented self helps to understand this aspect better from a psychological perspective. Lacan suggests in his mirror stage theory that the 'real self' can never be articulated completely using language, and yet a subject is trapped in the realm of symbolic order that compels it to rely on language to construct its identity. The endless chain of signifiers without fixed and ultimate meaning contributes to the fragmentation of the self rather than the creation of a unified self. This tension between the ideal and real self is heightened under Milena's gaze. Milena sees Kafka as an 'ideal', i.e., a genius, a thinker and a man of profound emotional depth. Kafka on the other hand views himself as broken, fragmented and inadequate. This clash between the ideal self projected upon him and the real

self he inhibits, causes a psychological split. Lacan would suggest that this occurs due to Kafka's desire to live up to Milena's expectations and the impossibility of doing so. The gap created due to this helplessness fragments Kafka's sense of subjectivity. His identity like his love is shattered by language, making language both a tool of fragmentation and its symptom.

In one of the most painful declarations, Kafka writes "Moreover, perhaps it isn't love when I say you are what I love the most- you are the knife I turn inside myself, this is love" (Kafka 191). Here love becomes inseparable from pain. It is not a space of union but of self wounding. The beloved becomes not a source of healing but the very instrument of suffering. This masochism, far from being incidental, is central to Kafkaesque love. Here, love loses its redemptive or even positive qualities and transforms into a wound, a repetition of loss and a compulsion to revisit absence. The knife becomes a metaphor signaling the act of turning language inwards and internalizing the failure of connection. Freud would interpret this as the symbolic return of the death drive while Barthes would suggest that the lover suffering from the impossibility of achieving complete discourse is forever wounded by the inadequacy of expression.

Thus, Kafka's *Letters to Milena* exposes a form of love which is not resolved but is recursive. Each letter spirals in the same abyss of absence, repression and fragmentation. It is a kind of love that cannot express itself without shattering into pieces. Freud, Lacan and Barthes converge not merely to help readers understand and interpret Kafka's letters but also to reveal the impossibility of the very discourse Kafka attempts. The letters become a *mise-en-scène* of desire where meaning is always deferred, self is always split and love is always already lost.

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## *Ishq-e-Na-Tamaam: The Aesthetics of Longing in Faiz and Faraz*

Swagata Sharma

PG Semester III

The poetry of Ahmad Faraz and Faiz Ahmed Faiz echoes the themes of *ishq* (passionate love), *hijr* (separation), *aarzu* (longing) and *na-tamaam* (incompleteness). Both poets imbue their work with a poignant yearning for an unfulfilled love, often choosing to prolong their own suffering through a deliberate deferral of union with the beloved. Lovers in their poems remain suspended in a state of anticipation — denied resolution or willfully refusing it. This paper examines how Faiz and Faraz represent longing as an aesthetic and spiritual condition, drawing on Roland Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse* and the Sufi notion of *fana* (annihilation of self).

Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse* offers a sharp psychological lens through which to view this condition. Through the politics of fragmentation, the lover waits endlessly for an absent *other*, undergoes language disjunction, experiences jealousy and anxiety over deferred union, yet continues the process of yearning. Disjointed speech reflects the sentiment of incomplete love. The structure of the ghazal reaffirms this disjunction of identity. A traditional *ghazal* consists of 5–15 couplets (*sher*), each of which can stand alone as an independent unit, yet remains part of an unfulfilled whole. The *radif* (refrain) and *qafiya* (rhyme scheme) further replete the language of repetition, infusing the lover's speech with longing and creating a rhythmic persistence that sustains yearning,

The Sufi notion of *fana* (annihilation of the self) deepens the reading of longing. The dissolution of the ego is necessary for spiritual communion. The beloved—often an allegory for the divine—remains ever-present in absence. This paradox of presence-in-absence intensifies yearning. In Sufi metaphysics, the beloved's cruelty—their coldness or distance—is not incidental, but spiritually essential.

Separation acts as a metaphysical condition to sustain the feeling of love. The beloved consistently remains out of reach, reinforcing the emotion as something that must be carried. Faraz's verse, from the poem *Ab ke hum bichhde* (*Now that we have parted*), states: *Ab ke hum*

*bichhde to shayad kabhi khwabo mein mile/ Jis tarah sookhe hue phool kitaabon mein mile.* The *aashiq* (lover) realises the painful permanence of separation and sustains love by wishing to unite with the beloved in dreams. Barthes's 'waiting' and 'absent' figures strongly correspond to this condition. The lover is suspended in a perpetual state of *intezar* (waiting), using his *ranjhish* (grievance) as a connection. The body suffers; existence is pain, yet this desire to see the beloved in a fantastical realm is the only thing that sustains the lover. Barthes writes, "Am I in love? Yes, since I am waiting" (Barthes 39). The lover's existence remains strongly bound to the beloved's absence, and it is through waiting that love subsists.

In the Sufi tradition, *hijr* (separation) serves as a poignant estrangement and transformative force. It is through distance that the ego is ruptured. This finds resonance in *Dono jahaan teri mohabbat me haar ke* (*Having lost both worlds in loving you*) by Faiz where he says: *Dono jahaan teri mohabbat me haar ke/Wo ja raha hai koi shab-e-gam guzaar ke.* Faiz's lover has sacrificed extensively for love, yet is rendered a painful parting. The *koi* in the ghazal refers to a universal lover who suffers heartbreak. The ache is deepened in the line: *Tum kya gaye ki rooth gaye din bahar ke*, implying that the joy of spring has also left with the *mehboob's* (beloved's) departure, and the lover is left with an utter void.

While *hijr* initiates the emotional estrangement, *fana* deepens this loss into spiritual dissolution. Love ceases to be abstract and shapes into an existential void, where the lover's identity collapses, and their self is fractured. In Sufi thought, the annihilation of the self is essential in achieving spiritual communion. This materializes in Faraz's poem *Us ne sukut-e-shab mein* (*In the silence of the night*), where the first *sher* (couplet) reads: *Us ne sukut-e-shab mein bhi apna payam rakh diya / Hijr ki raat bam par mah-e-tamam rakh diya.* Painful longing paradoxically brings the lover closer to his beloved, where their divine beauty (*mah-e-tamaam*) has glazed the *bam* (rooftop) of the lover. The rooftop here becomes the *maqam* (spiritual station) that helps attain the lover's purification of the soul. Thus, the dismantling of identity is essential to merge with the divine.

Additionally, Barthes's "I am engulfed" (Barthes 10) finds resonance in Faiz's poem *Dil mein ab yu tere bhoole huye gham aate hain* (*Now, in my heart, the forgotten sorrows of you return*) where the first couplet says: *Dilme ab yu tere bhoole huye gham aate hain/ Jaise bichhde huye kaabe me sanam aate hain.* Faiz writes that pain is an everlasting condition. The beloved becomes a recurring god-like figure that returns repeatedly like a lost deity returning to its shrine. The reification of *gham* (hurt) attacks the poet's memory in a *sanam* (deity)-like

form. Forgetting becomes an active wound that haunts the lover's heart, and the ego is stripped in his devotion to the beloved. The agony, the torment and the destructive nature of longing find refuge in the lover's body, and this is the vessel that propels spiritual transcendence.

In Faraz's poem *Ranjish hi sahi* (*Even if it means anguish*), the first verse reads: *Ranjish hi sahi dil hi dukhaane ke liye aa/ Aa fir se mujhe chhod jaane ke liye aa*. The lover desperately pleads for the beloved's return, even if it brings renewed anguish. Despite the lover's yearning, the union remains incomplete. *Ranjish* becomes a vessel to preserve love. Faraz shows a willful catapulting of lovers who intensify their longing in desiring an absent 'other'. This strongly resonates with Barthes's claim that the lover finds meaning in repetition.

Similarly, Faiz's poem "*Tum aaye ho na shab-e-intizar guzri hai*" (*Neither have you come nor has this long night of waiting ended*) offers a poignant pathos of a lover stuck in an indefinite loop of waiting. The night of waiting (*shab-e-intezar*) occurs infinitely, followed by a dawn (*sahar*) that refuses closure. The notion of *na-tamaam* aligns with Sufi metaphysics, where the divine is not attained through possession but through eternal pursuit. Love becomes a circular staircase, always climbing, never arriving. The repetition embedded in the ghazal also mirrors this cyclical yearning. The pairing of *radif* and *qafiya* for example: *intezar guzri hai, baar baar guzri hai, beqarar guzri hai*, enacts the very condition of incompleteness that the poem seeks to explore.

The journey of *ishq-e-na-tamaam* refuses closure and finds solace in the beloved's absence. Through Barthes's fragmented lover and the Sufi seeker of *fana*, longing becomes both an emotional and spiritual journey. Faraz's and Faiz's poetry remains entrenched in notions of unfulfilled love. The ghazal's structure—its disjointed couplets and recurring refrains—mirrors this incompleteness, where each return to the beloved is also a return to absence. The visceral nature of longing emphasises that love does not find fulfilment, yet garners sustenance in refusing a resolution. The state of incompleteness is not a failure but a necessary condition for spiritual ascent. Love persists not despite its unfulfillment but because of it.

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THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
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# M N E M E



## **Section III: Memories Of Add-on Course On Disability Studies**

## **Countless Insights and a Reflection on Growth: Experiences from the Add-On Course on Disability Studies**

Srijita Banerjee

UG Batch of 2019-22

PG Batch of 2022-24

We believe that the world is equal until we discover the ideological pitfalls, the makeshift veil that falls apart at the slightest of instigations. An opportunity to bolster that egalitarian spirit, to cultivate empathy and emerge as better, informed individuals was offered by the Department of English, The Bhawanipur Education Society College through a thirty-hour add-on course on *Disability Studies* in the month of April 2025. The course, although add-on, demands immediate integration into the college-curriculum.

Disability, as we know it, is many-faceted. Our assumption of the experiences of people with disability may scarcely exceed perception. Any stereotyping of disability is essentially dangerous because in the process, we often end up coming across as insensitive towards the experiences of our fellow human beings. The course began with a jolt, swiftly extending the experience of being disabled to those unaware of it. Through an exercise of role-play enacted in the classroom, Prof. Someshwar Sati offered us the experience of being temporarily sightless which made us not just vulnerable, but also helpless and defenceless in a way that was unprecedented to us. Students bumped into each other, spilled water over one another, identified wrong currency notes and mixed up one spice with another! In a span of thirty minutes, we realised that the world operates on the principle of ableism and does not acknowledge the different requirements of the disabled.

The course was designed in a way that would offer perspectives on disability from a range of vantage points, be it language, literature, films, social and literary theory, biology, medicine, psychology, neurology, legislation, policy, ethics and art. A primary area of unlearning we had to undergo concerned understanding what sort of ableist discourses framed narratives. Under the guidance of the professors who directed the course, we picked up theories and thematic models concerning disability that we were thitherto unaware of. We assumed and

made mistakes, and we corrected ourselves. Unlearning is not embarrassing; it is the inception of the expansion of our minds, hearts and souls. Trying to absorb perspectives other than our own does not require courage, but curiosity and the zeal to stand up for what we believe in.

In those thirty hours, we shifted many rocks beginning from moving our understanding of disability from medical to social, challenging stereotypes, examining stigma and welcoming and owning accountability. The course not only highlighted disabled voices, but also shed light on the fact that disability does not exist in isolation but intersects with race, class, sexuality, gender and other social categories. Through lectures by academics hailing from all over India, it was brought to our notice how disability and activism influenced amendments that introduced inclusivity to urban design and fostered empowerment of the disabled community.

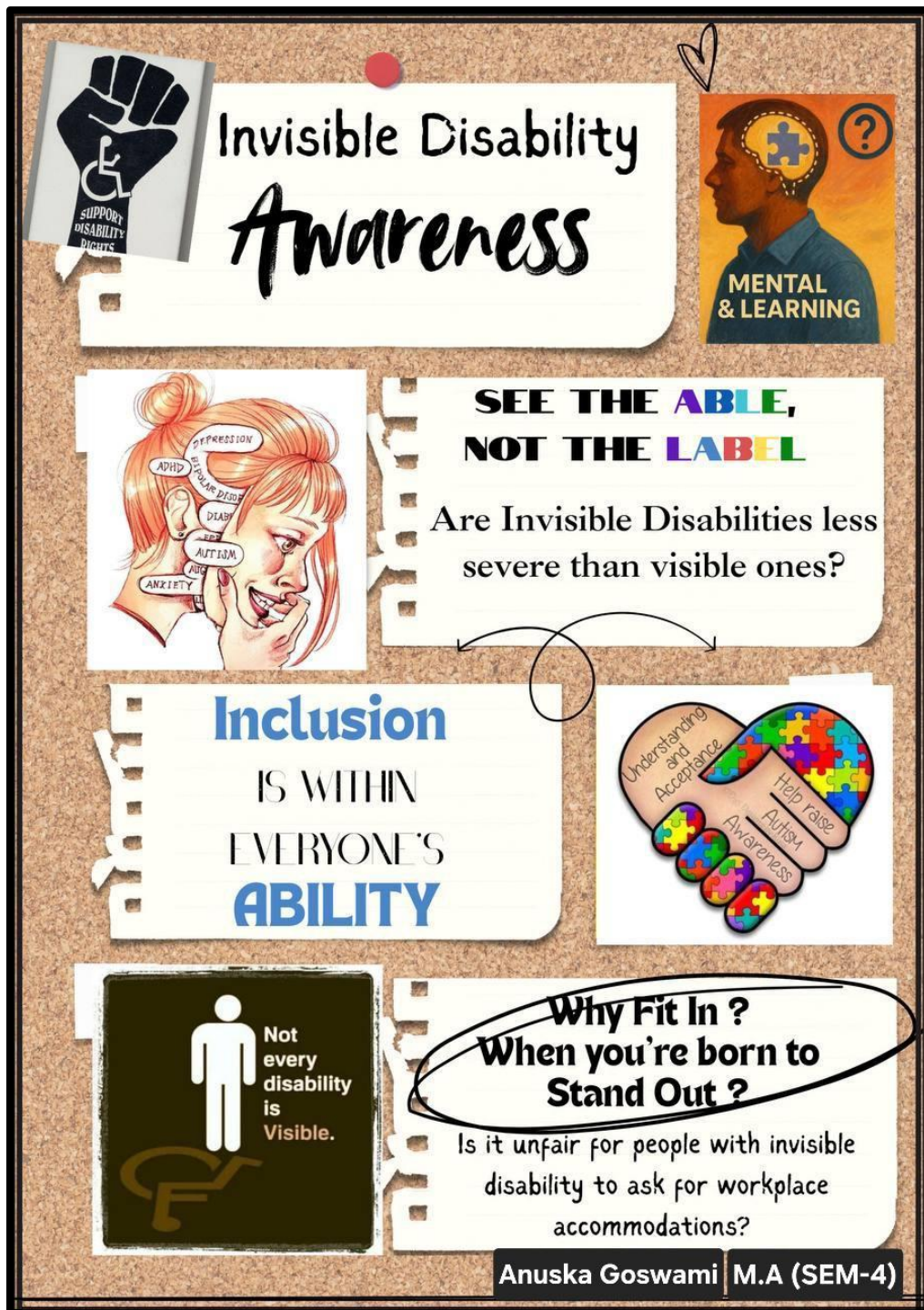
While society makes space for alternative narratives in terms of law, representation and architectural redesigns, the world of literature too undergoes the same change by introducing alternative readings of canonical texts. We truly enjoyed those lectures which critically analysed narratives that are central to our literary upbringing and social subject positions. It was through literature that the concept of 'evil' and *vikalang* became inseparable and dominated the cultural identity of the disabled. It is only through sensitisation programmes that the concepts of sin, evil, and moral degradation in connection with disability may be attenuated in cultural memory.

The course not only offered us in-depth critical knowledge of Disability Studies, but also opened up avenues to pursue further research and contribute to the ever-growing knowledge pool. The thirty-hour add-on course showed us how important Disability Studies is because it transformed how we perceive, represent and respond to disability. This course helped us note that Disability Studies moves away from "fixing the individual" towards changing the society while ensuring disabled voices are central, and promotes advocacy for social justice, accessibility and inclusion.

The Department of English was instrumental in inviting a number of scholars to this course who are actively contributing to Disability Studies. This truly helped the students, including myself, not only in gaining literacy in representation of disability but also in opening up avenues to challenge, question and reform.

I have had the privilege of attending a two-day workshop on Disability Studies arranged by the Department of English in 2022 which introduced me to Disability Studies. The add-on

course, coupled with the past workshop, imprinted on me a much more sensitized approach in not just analysing literature differently, but also perceiving the world in a much more egalitarian way. I am truly grateful to the Department for this opportunity.



Anuska Goswami | M.A (SEM-4)

Anuska Goswami

UG Batch of 2020-23

PG Batch of 2023-25

# DIFFERENT ABILITIES. EQUAL WORTH.

I lead. I learn. I move. I create. I innovate.



**DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY.  
LET'S BUILD A WORLD  
WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS.**

**BE INCLUSIVE. BE INFORMED.  
BE KIND.**



an awkward skit

ANAMTA IMAM

UG SEM VI

Anamta Imam

UG Batch of 2022-25

**DISABILITY IS NOT  
A DISTORTION,  
ABLEISM IS**

**SHRIJAN DASGUPTA  
SEMESTER VI**

**Shrijan Dasgupta**

**UG Batch of 2022-25**

# WE ARE LIMITLESS



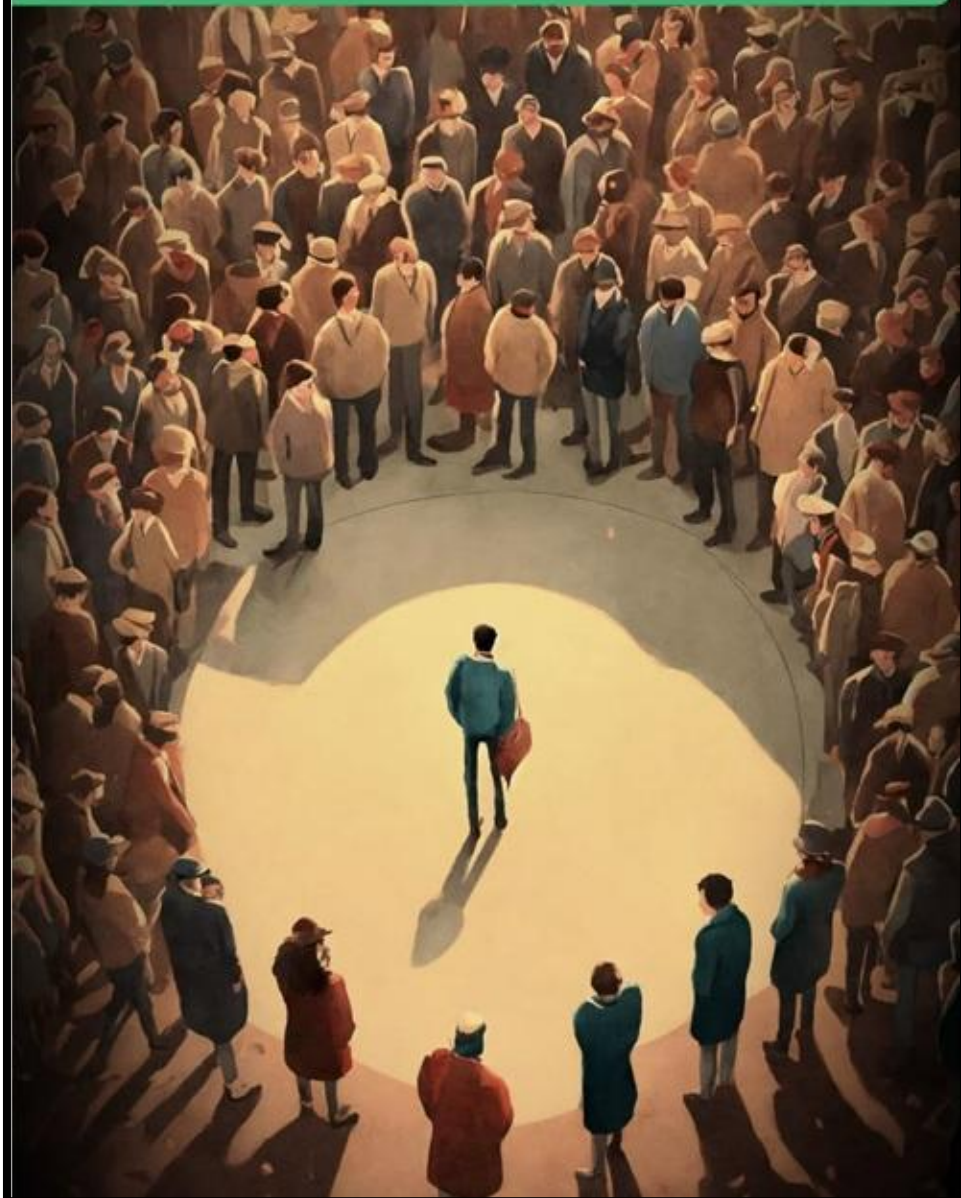
**Disability isn't inability.  
Celebrate diversity. Celebrate humanity.**

UG SEMESTER 6- ANAMIKA GUPTA

Anamika Gupta

UG Batch of 2022-25

**GAZE, WHISPERS AND ASSUMPTIONS MATTER.  
STOP EXCLUDING AND OTHERIZING .**



**Debanshu Ghosh**

**UG Batch of 2022-25**



THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
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# NOSTOS



## **Section IV: Alumni Contributions**

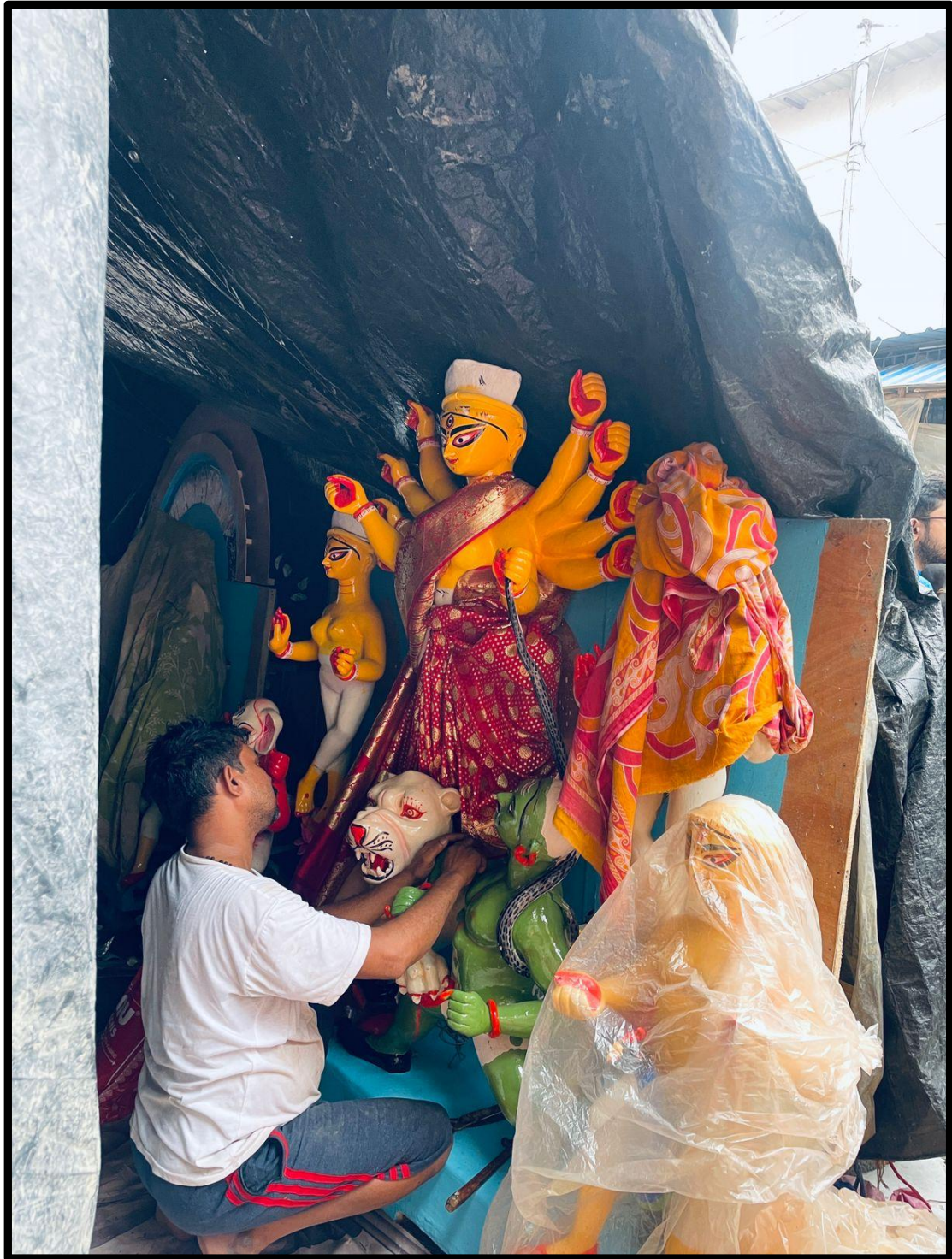


**Stages of Human Emotions**

**Namrata Choudhury**

**UG Batch of 2019-22; PG Batch of 2022-24**

**Watercolour on paper**



**The Finishing Touch**

**Kashis Sonkar**

**UG Batch of 2022-25**



**The Currency Building**

**Kashis Sonkar**

**UG Batch of 2022-25**



**Untitled**

**Saccham Gupta**

**UG Batch of 2022-25**

## **A Homeless House**

Madiha Irshad

UG Batch of 2022-25

They say this is home,

But the spirit doesn't feel the cool shade of a homely tree.

It rather feels like a treacherous dome,

For this spirit, the homely feels are a distant sea.

This dwelling is just concrete and bricks of hollowness abound,

Where the real cheerfulness touches seldom,

But the shadows of sorrow are always around,

There are children of loneliness with scarce freedom.

Tears have known no tenderness,

No touch of consolation but threats,

The sleepless pillow in the darkness

Has soaked them like vulnerable secrets.

All the concrete fails to give the gift of space;

It rather gives life an uneasy pace.

The dwellers have polluted the air's purity,

And created voids from disunity.

The ones who have the same blood in their veins,

Possess the devilish grin for each other's suffering and strains.

This spirit is not theirs:

It always craves for respite in foreign air.

The tongue speaks through a knot tied:

The knot locks away all the emotional delineation.

Because if untied,

The inner tempest will not caress.

This place has birthed broken smiles,

The hearing doesn't meet with harmony,

But utterings of hatred and jealousy,

Betrayal moors itself in these isolated aisles.

The familial strings that tie us in false oneness,

Have left strangling blemishes on the anatomy;

All hands are not held with love and tenderness,

But backs are threatened by daggers of envy.

All nights are not guarded by the angel of serenity,

All health is not filled with vitality,

All wives are not adored and highly regarded,

All daughters are not celebrated and safeguarded.

The walls have crawling creepers,

The evil eyes are omnipresent,

As the population moves upwards,

Vicious chaos lurks behind the sextant.

Is this a home or a house?

I am certain on my own:

This is a homeless house,

And home is unknown.

## The Artist

Hemoshmita Roy

UG Batch of 2022-25

Make love to me, paint me in your colour.

Rub your shades into me, with courage and valour.

Your hues, your strokes, every wrinkle, every curve.

Your craftsmanship is being honed to serve.

Every muscle twitches to be with you.

Arching in your rhythm, it mirrors you.

Every move, every gaze,

Every path that you trace

On my body are sand dunes:

your most beloved maze.

Your touch is embossed on my skin,

I am sculpted by your fingers.

I can feel the sensations akin,

and its memory still lingers.

Made by you and yours to mould,

loved by you and yours to behold.

## A Letter to the Department

Anuska Saha

UG Batch of 2020-23

I have always had a bad habit of avoiding speech. This is why it is only two years after graduation that I sat down to write this - a letter of gratitude and love which, until now, I have always found too difficult to express. I told myself that gratefulness is enough, that the universe has its mysterious channels through which it conveys good wishes and feelings to the people they are meant for. I still hold on to that belief in some way, but this is not just a long-overdue letter that I am writing. It is also a personal project where I work through my fear of words and their tendency to always go awry.

Five years ago, I was freshly out of school, filled to the brim with disillusionment and the conviction that I was done with the whole world of institutionalised education. The last few years at my all-girls Convent school had me convinced that there was no winning a game which put conformity before industry and creativity. I was adamant about not going to college, conceding only when my parents explained that they had zero expectations from me in terms of grades as long as I finished my degree. Additionally, The Bhawanipur College's reputation for a rich cultural life had compelled me to reckon that I would be spending more time in extra-curricular activities than in the classroom.

I logged into the first online meeting, determined to pay as little attention as possible and hate every minute of it. Miraculously, I failed, because for the first time in a classroom – an online one at that – it felt like being spoken *to* and not *at*. I listened through the first class, then the second, the third, and by the end of the third semester, I was going through the syllabus and reading up texts before classes even began. When we returned to physical classes, to my own surprise, I found myself shrinking from the bustling extracurricular circles I had been so looking forward to. Instead, the only time I spent in college was inside the classroom or the library, because there I found kindness, care and respect toward learning.

In fact, it was a kindness that was almost overwhelming because I was alien to it. It was being seen and cared for in a way which was unarming, because I had spent all my school years toughening myself up against indifference and condescension. Sometimes I did not know how

to respond when spoken to, because I had never been spoken to with grace, as with an equal, by someone on a podium previously. I seldom spoke in class unless spoken to (except that one time, CD Ma'am (Prof. Chitragada Deb), looking me square in the face, asked, "What's your 'Godot'?" and I returned only a petrified stare) and spent my three years there trying to make myself as inconspicuous as possible.

A part of me wishes I had communicated more freely and made the most of my proximity to such compassionate educators who were ever ready to offer guidance and support. However, what I ended up receiving I had never asked for. It was the most invaluable thing I could have ever expected to receive from an educational institution. Simply being in an environment where educators showed up with intention, love, and respect was enough to repair the prolonged damage done over the years, bringing me to realise that learning mattered to me way more than my previous reservations concerning it. Anyone could tell that all this was not accidental but had been cultivated with intention, beyond the classroom, with empathy as the unwavering foundation that holds the department together and makes it so special.

Growing up, I never had role models. The adults in my life did not paint a pretty picture of what it means to become someone in the world. But now, more than ever, in this liminal phase where fear and possibilities of future becomings pull me apart every hour, it is your kind faces that sometimes emerge, forming an anchor here and there, assuring me that all is not horror and apocalypse, and that there are still ways of being a person in this world that matter. Words will never suffice, but on this occasion, there is not much I could do except let you know that it is thanks to you, all of you, that I am still chasing what is valuable to me, despite the suffering and the failures. Thank you for making me believe that there is hope in trying.

## Saudade

Shreosi Goswami

UG Batch of 2018-2021

PG Batch of 2021-2023

Memory is a strange bell—  
once rung, it can never be silenced,  
but only softened into a murmur,  
and its echo may fill the soul long after the world has forgotten why it rang

- Walter de la Mare

Just like my favourite lyrics and the tastiest last bite of a Cornetto ice-cream cone, I have always wanted my college days to last forever, but good things are transient. Those 5 years, comprising my bachelors and masters, passed in the blink of an eye. The cherished, vivid, indelible memories that The Bhawanipur Education Society College has given me remain everlasting and deeply embedded, like a permanent tattoo on the hearts of students. We carry them quietly within us.

Going back to college feels like going back to *Baper bari* (or “parents’ house”, in terms of Bengali social structure.) Our professors have given us that very warmth which we receive from our families, much akin to the beautiful and much-needed toastiness of mellow sunlight kissing scenic mountain tops, turning them the hue of molten gold.

Upon entering the college, every step from the gate feels nostalgic, like flipping through an old photo album with moist eyes and a lump in the throat, where every page showcases different stories ranging from winning a prize, to learning a lesson, from cutting birthday cakes to celebrating Teachers’ Day. Gaining friends as well as “frenemies”, reminiscing heartbreak-stories or tales of beautiful camaraderie. But overall, I would choose them all over again, with two big dollops of love and gratitude, for those memories immeasurably precious to me.

I long for the photo album to be perennial but sadly, it ends too soon, just like our favourite chocolate. The Bhawanipur College is a place where art, ideas, discussions, arguments, exhaustion, *Umang*, selfies, corridor rants, lousy answers, fun, wit, literature, celebration, workshops, *Saatvik's* cheap vegetarian canteen food, sports arena, philosophy and aromatic coffee are always in abundance.

The classrooms have always been a unique melting pot, consisting of one group that appeared ready to walk the ramp and talk the talk, and another group that had just dragged themselves out of their beds for the first period at 10.15 AM - punctual, sincere, and prepared for all but a fashion emergency. Some willingly/unwillingly became mere contacts as portrayed in the film *3 Idiots*: "touch *mein rahenge, saal mein ek baar zaroor milenge*"(we will remain in touch and certainly meet once in a year). However, those meet-ups never took place. Some were like Rancho - brilliant, ever humble and helpful. Some resembled Raju; they understood and discovered themselves while some "Farhans" had their eureka moments, by chancing upon what they truly love. As for our professors, while their temper may resemble Virus when irked, they actually helped a lot. Their scoldings worked wonders. Their timely sternness and sweet reprimands worked faster than any other possible source of motivation.

It would be a crime if I did not acknowledge GT Ma'am (Dr. Gargi Talapatra) to be the "Greatest of all Time" as my batch preferred to refer to her. She is my Bible. I have followed her religiously. She started teaching us Horace in UG Semester I and I was immediately charmed by her scintillating wit and intelligence. She taught us to read beyond and in-between-the-lines and never just taught us our texts. GT Ma'am held a mirror in front of us. Everybody had the liberty to state their minds politely before her. This is where the students breathed in relief, where every opinion received acknowledgement. Here, she was the master sculptor at work, ready to fashion discerning individuals out of young adults.

T.S. Sir (Prof. Tathagata Sen) is almost synonymous with the Department of English; his smile brightens even the gloomiest days. He taught many things, ranging from *Macbeth* to rhetoric and prosody during our Undergraduate days. In the MA years, he taught us texts like *Rhinoceros* and *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. It was he who made us realize that 'myths are misleading'.

ST Ma'am (Dr. Souraja Tagore) defines the term "beauty". Her impeccable dance performances always dazzled us. Her "Anadamela" at Pathuriaghata Rajbari during Durga Puja

remains a remarkable cultural fest where tradition meets elegance and everyone breathes in the air of creativity and happiness.

The Department of English has many other gems such as NJ Ma'am (Prof. Neetisha Jha) - one of the sweetest and most patient professors I have met. Every time before taking a picture, she just needs to adjust her tresses and smile, and she is picture perfect! Just like that!

CD Ma'am (Prof. Chitrangada Deb) is the ever-poised professor. In her classes, nobody dared talk and Roald Dahl required one's full attention. SCt Sir (Prof. Sayan Chatterjee) was always all ears for students. I have ended up disturbing him with the silliest questions and he always answered graciously and patiently.

GS Sir (Prof. Gaurav Singh) was another kind-hearted teacher who explained Kafka to us. AKB Sir (Prof. Arup Kumar Bag) remains our linguistic king of sarcasm. SK (Prof. Sonal Kapur) Ma'am and JG Ma'am (Dr. Jashomati Ghose) - quaint, humble, brilliant. SCh sir (Prof. Soumyajit Chandra) - this person's smooth oratory skills make him sound like one of Shakespeare's heroes - just about to rule The Globe Theatre!

We had to bid goodbye to some of our teachers like SB Ma'am (Prof. Soumyosree Banerjee), SSG Ma'am (Prof. Sayantani Sengupta), SC Ma'am (Dr. Suchandra Chakravarty), PGT Sir (Prof. Pema Gyalchen Tamang) and SR Ma'am (Prof. Srimoyee Roy). They are always fondly remembered by me.

## Unlearning

Kaushiki Ganguly

UG Batch of 2018-21

PG Batch of 2021-23

A new language has been introduced

Full of grunts and groans.

A grunt means you want something,

A groan means 'check your phones.'

The binary language would increase productivity,

Smoothen human-AI interactions, they said.

'A simple, global language to connect the world,'

The socio-political machinery brayed:

'Wars will cease, technology will increase,

The world will be simple and happy again,'

The ceremony ended with a grand bonfire

With people cheering to burn and erase all languages from their brain.

With words erased from existence,

All pain and suffering has been solved.

A grunt solves bodily needs,

A groan to communicate via phones and 'evolve'.

All forms of writing and speaking is illegal now.

So no conflict and miscommunication can occur

But my home was taken, my family missing for months,

And I am yet to find answers or even a human to confer.

So if you're able to read this, run.

Run far, far away. For they will punish you.

For your words, your thoughts, your independent spirit.

For it is a crime to understand words in a world that has forgotten to do more than scroll on devices.

Easier to grunt and groan, to live a clueless, happy, selfish life. No judgment, but do burn this poem then.

Or else, if you're a fool who still believes, grow a spine and use your own words. For they still hold power that phones and phonies cannot suffocate.

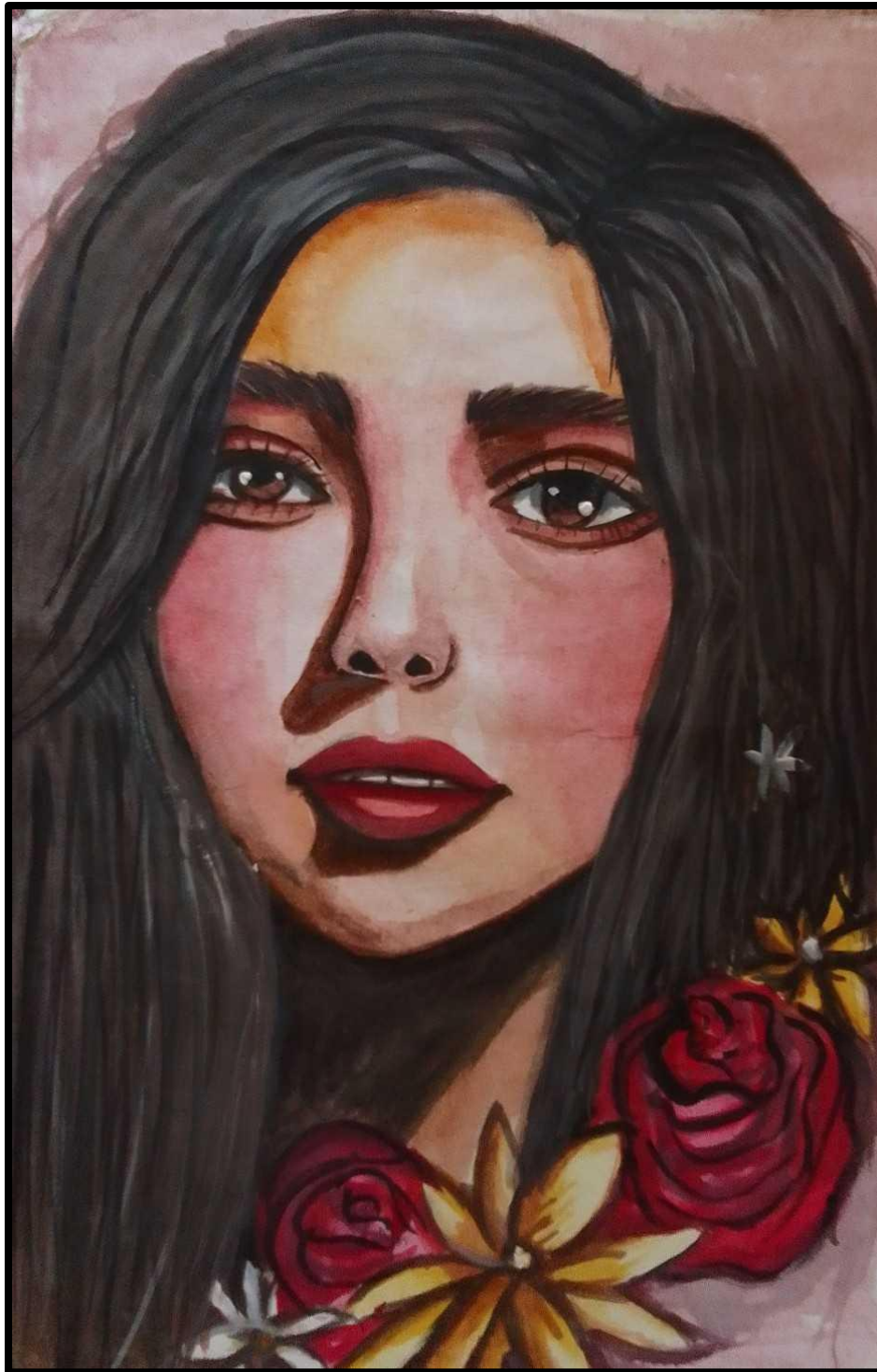


THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
THE BHAWANIPUR EDUCATION SOCIETY COLLEGE

# KALEIDOSCOPE



## Section V: Artwork



**Rosy**

**Dibya Burman**

**UG Semester V**

**Watercolour**



**Untitled**

**Ishika Gupta**

**UG Semester V**

**Acrylic on canvas**



**Sakura Shadows**

**Md. Nawaaf Ali**

**UG Semester I**

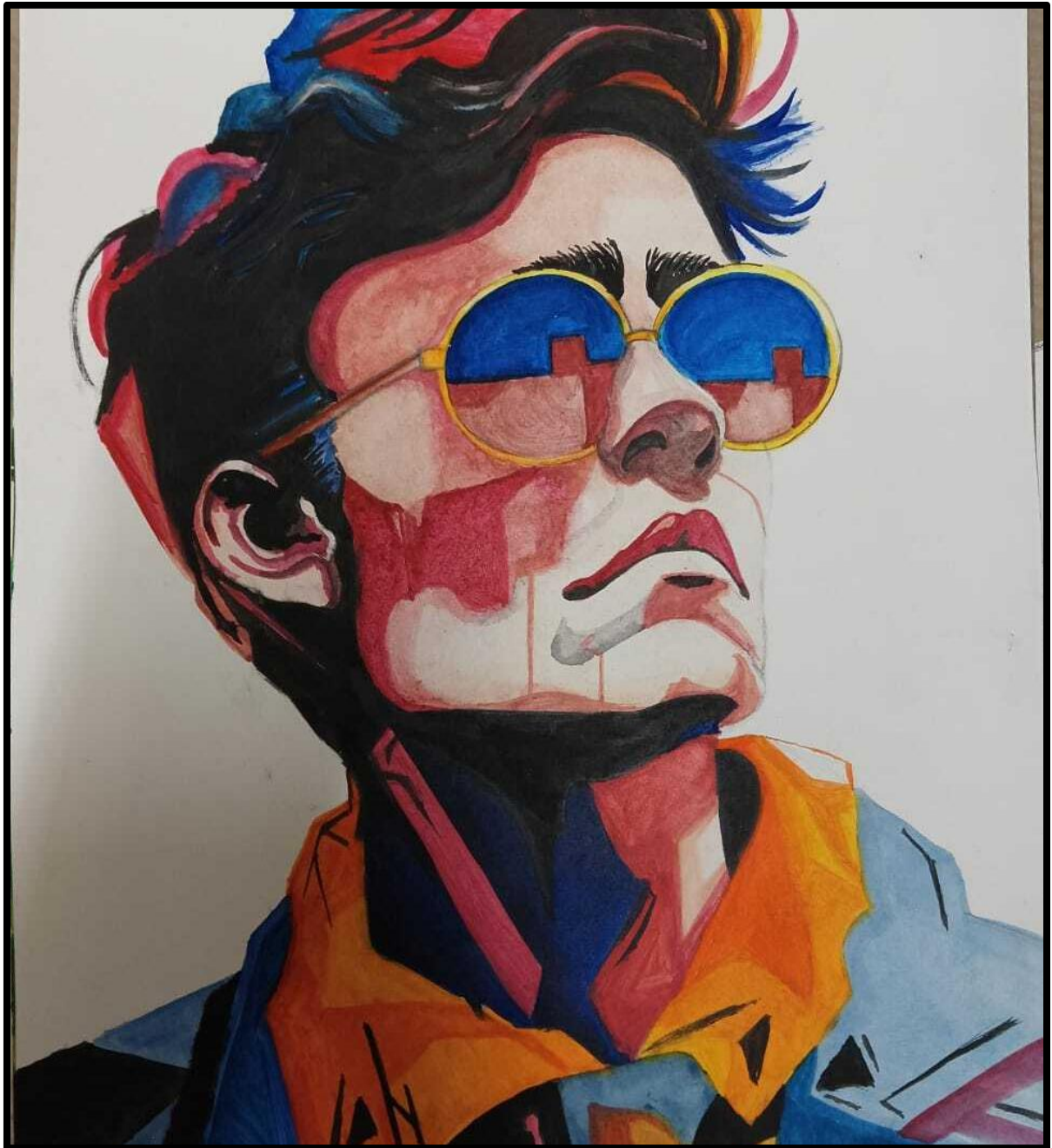
**Acrylic**



**Untitled**

**Nafisa Nasir**

**PG Semester I**



**The Chromatic Gaze**

**Shibtanu Rakshit**

**UG Semester I**

**Watercolour on paper**



Untitled

Sneha Mazumder

UG Semester I

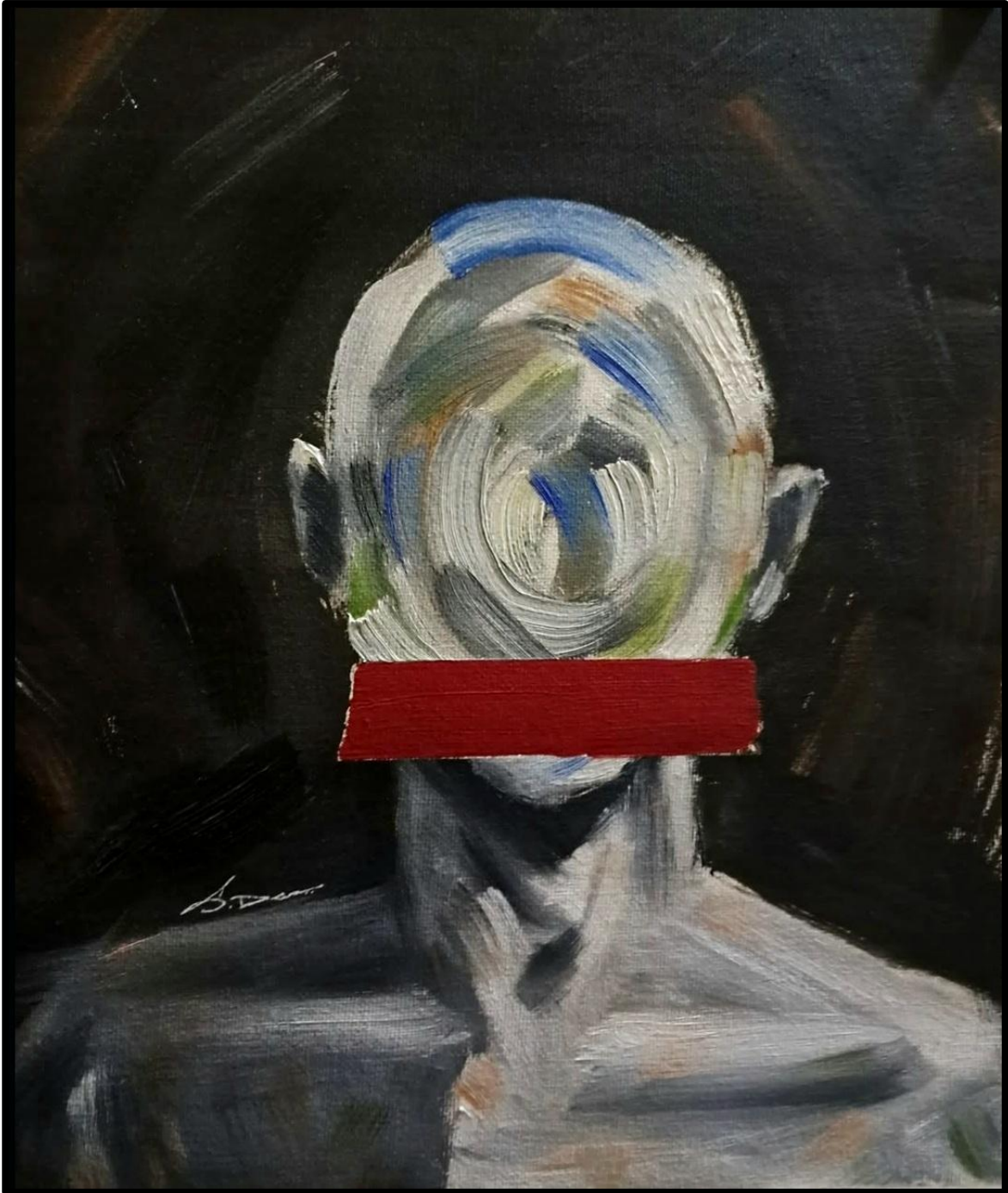


**Addiction**

**Subham Das**

**UG Semester I**

**Charcoal**



**Lost**

**Subham Das**

**UG Semester I**

**Oil Paint**



**Untitled**

**Tuhina Jana**

**UG Semester V**

**Ink on paper**



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# CAMERA LUCIDA



## Section VI: Photography



**Untitled**  
**Ayra Ali**  
**PG Semester I**



**The flame that never spoke yet feels divine**

**Ayra Ali**

**PG Semester I**



**Vortex-an anecdote of endurance**

**Sayantani Banerjee**

**UG Semester V**



**The charm of Kolkata-Victoria Memorial**

**Sristi Chanda**

**PG Semester III**



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**The Department of English**



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