

ISSUE 1 | VOL. 1 | AUGUST 2023

# PEARLS OF THE EAST: ASIAN NARRATIVES



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*Look out for the 'Undiscovered Glimpses of India'*



# EDITOR'S *Note*

From glimpses of the unseen India to the experience with the imaginary, Love for art goes beyond spoken words and national boundaries. It's through the eyes of a human that art is unveiled and consumed, nourishing the craved. This art can be of anyone from anywhere, managing to strike chords of your aesthetic pleasure. It's through art that we wish to present our love for it, proving that it's engraved in us and remains inseparable.

The pride and struggles of a nation's growth are reflected through its art. Be it the exact depiction or a metaphoric piece, there lies a story in the heart of every valued creation.

East Asia, a forever rich in stories and culture, has finally garnered the appreciation and attention its art deserved. The rise of this very Asia is rooted from a past of dreams and hope. It is a landscape of culture, diversity and the very respect of the same. The much-deserved rise of Asian content and cultural knowledge worldwide is gradually resulting in inclusion and equal participation of the east with its west.

This periodical functions to provide a tiny glimpse from the vast variety of art that East Asian nations like India, Korea, Japan and China present.

Mira Editorial Team.

# OUR VISION



# The films you know, the stories you don't.

Since Bhanu Athaiya's Oscar Win in 1983 for Costume Designing, India has witnessed various nominations for films, music and art. We've proudly basked in the glory of wins when our films got international recognition. The audience worldwide consumes the art presented to them and hardly gets the time to introspect the significance of these awards or the authenticity of the selection process. The 'Film Federation of India' selects a film as an entry for the Oscars. In 2022, the Tamil film 'Koozhangal' was selected for India's official entry to the Oscars. Shoojit Sarcar directed 'Sardar Udham' was also shortlisted for the same. However, the Indian Jury's reasons for rejecting the film didn't seem to be rational. 'Sardar Udham' is based on an Indian revolutionary named Sardar Udham Singh who assassinated Micheal O'Dwyer to avenge the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

A jury member said that it propagates hatred towards the British and the selected film doesn't have any agenda attached to it. Many people found this reason invalid to reject a film. An entry for the Oscars for any foreign country is not only an opportunity to get recognition but is a question of representation. The stories created are often untold and unknown to the western world. Sardar Udham was one such story, now mislabelled and rejected. Flashback to 2001, 'Lagaan', a film that presented an enthralling tale of Indians rebelling against the British Raj through a game of Cricket was India's official entry to the Oscars. The question therefore, is how does the thought process influences the selection process and are stories which need to be told are ignored? In cases like these, are we still carrying the white man's burden and trying to cater stories that meet their expectations of storytelling? Danny Boyle's 'Slumdog Millionaire' that portrays the life of people in the slums of Mumbai swept eight Academy Awards.

How is it that we accept an appropriated film that creates a misrepresented perception but reject stories of our own people, subaltern for decades? Somehow, we have to awaken ourselves from colonial slumber and question ourselves to tell the stories we want to.

-Mrudula Neware  
TYBA (A)





# CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," directed by Ang Lee and released in 2000, is a visually captivating masterpiece that beautifully blends martial arts, romance, and fantasy.

The film is set in 19th century China and follows the intertwined stories of skilled warriors Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien, played by Chow Yun-Fat and Michelle Yeoh respectively, as they seek to recover a stolen sword and confront their suppressed feelings for each other.

Ang Lee's visionary direction, combined with the stunning choreography of Yuen Wooping, brought an ethereal quality to the martial arts sequences, elevating the genre to new heights. The movie's groundbreaking use of Wi rework and gravity defying stunts redefined action filmmaking.

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" achieved critical acclaim and garnered numerous awards, including four Oscars: Best Foreign Language Film, Best Art Direction, Best Original Score, and Best Cinematography. Its success both in Asia and internationally marked a significant milestone in promoting Chinese cinema on the global stage.



Despite its achievements, the film also faced controversies. Some critics argued that its predominantly Chinese-speaking cast was a strategic move to appeal to western audiences, leading to debates about cultural authenticity and representation. Additionally, the film's unique blend of genres occasionally puzzled audiences who were accustomed to more traditional martial arts films.

In my opinion, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" is a cinematic gem that transcends cultural boundaries and offers a mesmerizing experience. Its fusion of emotional depth and breathtaking action showcases the artistry and innovation of filmmaking. While controversies may have arisen, the film's impact on cinema and its ability to captivate audiences with its enchanting tale of love and honor cannot be denied.



-Shweta Waghmare  
SYBBA

**Travelling from a fast-paced urban city like Pune to a rural setting can feel like a great deal of a difference in time and space. At least that is how I feel when I spend my days in pockets of Garhwal. One might know it as a religious place hosting one of the Char Dhams or a place that witnessed the Kedar Nath tragedy. As much as these facts are true, this is not the only story about Garhwal.**

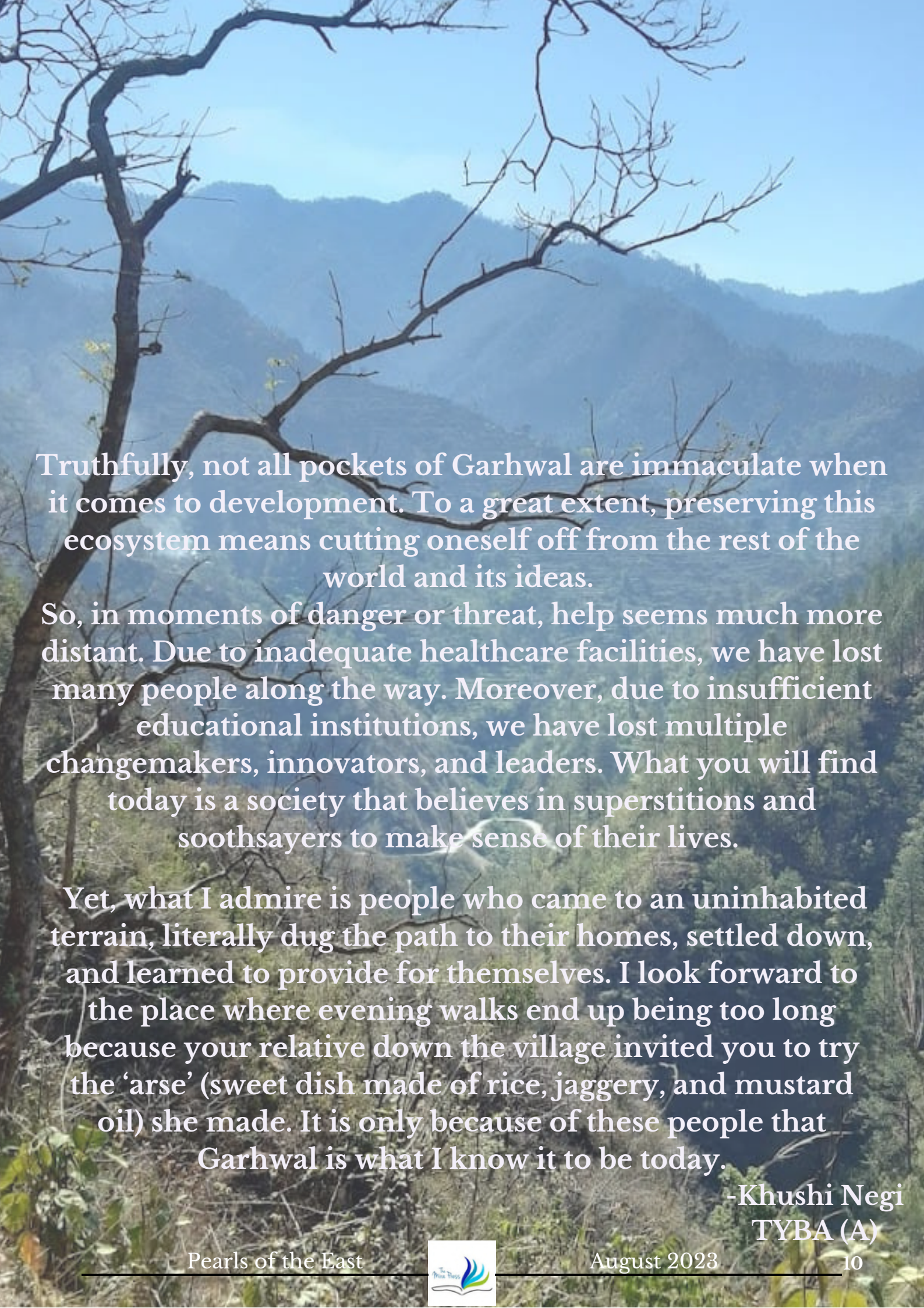
It's a phone that an urbanite does not leave home without, it's a 'darant' (sickle) that a Garhwali always carries to cut grass and wood. And it's the 'thanthu' (head scarf) that becomes instrumental in balancing that pile of logs on the head. Bursoli is the little place in Garhwal that my father was born and raised in. It's a family of over 200 individuals, with a common ancestral lineage.

What I've seen are simple, hardworking people who wake up at the crack of dawn, have a cup of chai with a stale roti in that chilly morning air, head out for the jungle to collect fodder, spending their daily hours on the field till dusk. What I have witnessed is a clan that takes pride in what they sow and reap to eat, people who find the self-grinded flour from a chakki much sweeter than the one bought from the shop.

What I have heard is the history of people who would travel hours on foot for that one bag of salt. Thinking about it now, it's not the story of celebrated people that has been passed on to my generation, it's the story of common people and their struggle that has been reiterated again and again.

Mountains can represent both, the most breathtaking views and challenging conditions. You will witness the sights of rugged mountains meeting the clouds, snow on some lofty peaks, heart-melting valleys and glistening waterfalls. However, you will also find deep gorges and ravines that are threatening enough, to make you fall. Heavy rain can become your worst nightmare. You might also have chances to encounter both, prey and predators on a regular basis. Moreover, making a home in the mountains is not an easy task. Most houses you might spot today are almost a semi-century or century old.

They are not houses of bricks but of sturdy stones that have been shaped and fixed with sieved sand with almost 3 years of diligent and manual labour. I have to say, I'm not in complete touch with my culture. I do understand Garhwali, but I'm not proficient in speaking it. I've also never experienced life the hard way. In the city, I seldom find individuals with whom I can bond over my heritage and experiences. Perhaps that is why I feel overjoyed when I'm able to find just one.



Truthfully, not all pockets of Garhwal are immaculate when it comes to development. To a great extent, preserving this ecosystem means cutting oneself off from the rest of the world and its ideas.

So, in moments of danger or threat, help seems much more distant. Due to inadequate healthcare facilities, we have lost many people along the way. Moreover, due to insufficient educational institutions, we have lost multiple changemakers, innovators, and leaders. What you will find today is a society that believes in superstitions and soothsayers to make sense of their lives.

Yet, what I admire is people who came to an uninhabited terrain, literally dug the path to their homes, settled down, and learned to provide for themselves. I look forward to the place where evening walks end up being too long because your relative down the village invited you to try the 'arse' (sweet dish made of rice, jaggery, and mustard oil) she made. It is only because of these people that Garhwal is what I know it to be today.

-Khushi Negi  
TYBA (A)



# The Road Map and The Canvas

As the plane's engines roared to life, a stylish young woman in a chic kurta and a gracefully draped scarf settled into her seat. Meanwhile, another lady, similarly dressed, trudged down the narrow aisle, her face immersed in her phone as she angrily sent a voice note.

Lady 2: "It's Bhaskor, Bhaskar nahi. You have written the wrong name".

A soft, exasperated sigh from the young lady broke her reverie. She looked up to see a beautiful but reserved-looking woman.

It was Piku, a character she adored.

"Can people just stop misspelling my name? How many times do I have to repeat myself?"

Piku muttered under her breath.

The young girl broke into a chuckle and both women shared a knowing smile.

**“Hi, I'm Piku!” Piku introduced herself.**

**"Piku, that's an interesting name! What does it mean?"**

**The plane continued to taxi down the runway as Piku and Hayat (the young girl) exchanged stories and got to know each other better.**

**As the flight took off, Piku and Hayat found themselves engrossed in deep conversation.**

**Piku, despite her reserved demeanor, opened up to Hayat, sharing more about her life, work, and her passion for architecture.**

**Piku: "You know, I design buildings for a living. It's my way of leaving a mark on this world, just like my father did in his own eccentric way."**

**Hayat realized Piku's father had passed away.**

**Hayat: "That's fascinating, Piku. It must be amazing to create something that will stand the test of time."**

**"..Piku, would you do it again? Would you perhaps do things differently? Your dad sure sounded eccentric."**

**"No, I wouldn't change a thing," Piku affirmed.**

**"He sounded eccentric because he was, and he forced me to become independent. I couldn't have reached where I am if it hadn't been for him. I'm just glad he went with a smile."**

**Piku: "And what about you, Hayat?"**

Hayat: "Well, Piku, I believe life is a journey, and we're constantly evolving and adapting to new experiences. I like to think of myself as a canvas on which the colours of life are painted. Each experience adds a new brushstroke to the canvas, hence my name."

Piku nodded, appreciating Hayat's perspective. The two continued to chat throughout the flight, finding a connection that transcended their initial differences.

As the plane touched down at their destination, Piku and Hayat exchanged contact information, promising to meet up again during their trip.

They both knew that this chance encounter had the potential to turn their road trip into a truly unforgettable adventure.

Little did they know that their journey would be filled with laughter, tears, and a deeper understanding of life, as they embraced the everchanging canvas of existence together.

-Zainab Tamim  
TYBA





# Live, Love, Laugh



“Hi Ma, I’m so sorry for just disappearing, but you and I both know that I had to get out of that house. I promise I’ll be back in a week. Plus I’m already in the plane so there’s nothing that can be done. Take care, love you!”

As I turned on the airplane mode on my phone, I heard a sigh next to me, a middle aged woman with shoulder length hair looked up and gave me an awkward smile. “Hi, I must apologize but I just couldn’t help but hear your voice message. I hope everything is okay?”

I sat stunned. This woman looked strikingly familiar, but I couldn’t tell exactly who she was. “ANJALI!” I heard a scream, but it soon turned out, it was me who screamed. The woman looked shocked after hearing her name. I was shocked too. The girl, the woman who I had grown up watching was sitting right next to me. With her beautiful shoulder length hair secured with a black hairband, she still looked young. She still looked like the Anjali I knew, I loved, I hated.



“Excuse me?” Anjali snapped her fingers, bringing me back to reality. She chuckled. “Yeah people generally have that reaction when they see me, especially those who are around your age.” I quickly recovered from my dreamy haze. “You really are Anjali, but how, what are you doing here? Can I have your autograph? Why did you cut your hair again?” I blurted out all these questions in a go.


“Okay.... I’m sorry, I didn’t catch your name?”

“Maeve”

“Oh that’s a beautiful name. But Maeve, I need you to breathe. We have the whole plane ride to get to know each other. don’t we?”

I nodded quickly, curious to know everything about this woman sitting next to me. The logical part of my mind tried to tell me to calm down a little, but oh well, this is Anjali. Anjali Sharma. The girl who I loved. The girl who taught me how to love. The first girl I saw who had hair similar to mine. The first girl who showed me that it’s okay to dress up however you want.

But Anjali Sharma was also the woman I hated. The woman who wore sarees and bangles. The woman with long hair. The woman who fell for a man who didn’t love her years ago. The other woman in a love triangle. The woman who left a perfect man to go back to her first love. I hated her so much that I started hating myself for ever loving her.



“So what were you saying?” She prompted me.

“Oh yes, how are you?”

“I’m good, happy.” I raised my eyebrows. She noticed it and smiled. “I know, I have seen many people criticizing my life choices. About why I married my husband even after I had such a perfect guy, Aman, waiting for me at the Mandap. And it breaks my heart, as well as Rahul’s, to see our love out in the open to be judged. But I seriously am happy. Till date, we play basketball once a week. Once I got better, I found a job in a college as a basketball coach.

I taught Anjali how to play basketball. She is now a national level player. I’m coming back from one of her matches.”

I never realized how burdening it must be for you. And you’re right, I have seen so many people talk about how you made the wrong choice. But you were so different from the Anjali we saw with Rahul in college. I used to think Rahul fell in love with you because you had changed, the new Anjali who wore sarees and had long hair. I thought he started liking you because you fit into the societal standards.”



She started laughing. “All of you have got it completely wrong. With Rahul I have always been my truest self. I don’t have to worry about him judging me. I had changed because of my mother’s pressure. Because of society’s pressure. When we met after all those years, and I played basketball with him after nine years, something awakened inside of me. When I met Aman, I always knew there was something missing. I just didn’t know what. When I met Rahul, the vision cleared. All those years, I looked after my mother and rarely did something for myself. The basketball match made me realize how carefree I was. Rahul made me realize how carefree I was.”

“Because pyaar dosti hai (love is friendship)” I still remembered the line Rahul used in the class.

“Yes, because pyaar dosti hai. And I married my best friend. And yes I know that he has his flaws. But I do too. And we love each other nevertheless.”

“I am so glad to hear that. And I am so glad I met you. All these prejudices I had against you, I feel so foolish now. I always had this lens in front of me, that you did the wrong thing. Just because you followed your heart. By the way, I have to say this, but I love your hair. You look beautiful with short hair.”



“Thank you. I love them too. My long hair was a headache to handle. Even I love short hair. And you’re not foolish. We always make mistakes, I would know. You know this one year, Rahul thought Anjali’s birthday was a day earlier. Now just to tease him, we deliberately cut a cake the day before.”

No way, really? Well, I don’t think he has a good memory, does he? You know this happened with my mother as well. She forgot my birthday last year.”

“Oh no, she must’ve felt so sorry. That reminds me, is everything okay at your house?”

“Oh yes, don’t worry, it’s just some minor family drama.”  
“Who’s there in your family?”

And just like that, I knew I had gained a friend. Meeting Anjali made me realize how foolish we are to judge love. To judge someone we don’t know. Meeting Anjali made this twenty year old girl realize that it’s never too late to start living for yourself. That it’s never too late to fall in love and it’s never too late to follow your heart.

-Purva Joshi  
TYBA

NEW YORK  
City

# THE BITS BEYOND SYLLABUS



One thing an optimist and literature fanatic absolutely despises is monotony and stagnation of lifestyle. Being a lover of change and a searcher of newness, it was a year filled with dislikes and adjustments. Not that I'm not capable of living with gratitude, but there's only limited ways in which a person can find happiness in the same day when repeated a hundred times. So, when I say the booking of tickets to New York for my solo trip were a sudden decision, they were that unplanned. After a year filled with duties and consistency, this was a form of self-care.

It was time to make the best of time, constant thoughts of a certain place I was heading to, consuming my mind. I boarded the plane with the least attentiveness. My internet history filled with searches on New York's must visits. It was as if I made the thoughts of New York so primary, the actual reality of present felt like flashes. A hazy walk to the aircraft and a polite "Hello" by the cabin crew. One action followed another and soon I was sitting in my designated seat.



The seat beside me looked occupied and a little fazed. Perhaps it was the call she was attending that evoked such emotions. As her conversation on call dived deeper, her distress became apparent. The conversation was ended with a very passive exchange of goodbyes and she clicked the red button with a heavy sigh. The announcement by the crew led us to then switching our devices to the airplane mode. "It's an 8 hours flight and the call with my daughter is making me doubt this entire solo trip plan, would you like to become acquainted?" asked the gentle voice beside me. My reply of assurance reflected a similar eagerness to know her and was continued by an exchange of our names. "My name is Shashi; I'm going to New York for a friend's wedding."

"Are we both on a solo mission?" I cackled at the question and replied, "I'm afraid we are." She asked if this was my first time traveling alone, and I nodded nervously. It was her second solo trip; she had previously visited New York. "It was a completely shaking experience for me, new people new language, I realised how protected I was my entire life. I had never been exposed to so much information and newness before, and I felt lonely and strange for the first time." "I don't regret a bit of those feelings, because they were the driving force for me to learn the English language". The ending caught me off guard. "To learn English?"



“I was born in a small family, with fragmented education. Even if I had a little knowledge of the language, the burden of its pronunciation and perfection being judged made me crawl back”. ‘I never felt the need to know another language to communicate, when most of my conversations were complete through the two native ones I owned. Later on, however I realised, English was not just a means of communication, it was a status symbol. It was a means to throw shade at people who you thought knew less than you. It was my weakness that embarrassed my daughter and husband. So, when its true nature was revealed to me, I became passionate to ace it. My aim to study English was shaped through unwanted memories in the start, but as I was swallowed by this beautiful language, taught to me by an amazingly kind and passionate teacher, my mindset was altered. It wasn’t a revenge or weapon to prove my capacity anymore, it was a step towards introspection and self-love.” “ At the very end of my learning experience, it wasn’t just communication through a foreign language I learnt, I learnt the ability to love myself. You often leave behind your most precious abilities to start a family, I didn’t realise how my duties of being a mother took away my ability to make friends, english regifted me that ability.”



At this point, it felt like taking notes. This was too good to be gone waste. Women often overlook each other's ability of understanding. We are such strong beings with such immaculate emotional intelligence. The aspect that's looked upon as our weakness has forever been our superpower. It's forever been our tragic strength. The conversation was bought to a pause when Shashi had a sudden moment of remembrance. She jumped to grab her tote bag from below her airplane seat and dragged it onto her lap, a steal dabba was revived from the bag and she opened it, offering me some Besan laddoos. They looked too delicious to be denied and the smell of deliciousness enveloped the aircraft.

“I always had a vision and passion of my own, I was just too scared to channel it, I was conditioned to be a lady who could be disrupted in a conversation. I thought I was born to admire those that were smart. When in fact I was born to shape my own success. My solo trip to New York wasn't just a little trip for a wedding of my niece, it was journey within me. It gave me the that confidence to walk with pride, wearing a trench coat and a perfectly ordered coffee latte in hand. To look in the eye of every person I talked to. To complete my sentences and to start a business of my own.”



“I left the job of pleasing people, when ironically it all began with the exact aim.” “When people needed my help, I would be standing first, but what about when I needed help? When I placed the call for the english classes, I knew I needed it. I knew it was time for me to come to my rescue.”

“I still don’t know what the old Shashi would do if she didn’t apply for the classes and learned english, walked the entire way home, ordered a breakfast with stuttering speech or been laughed at for not being modern. Because if she wasn’t the way she was, the new Shashi talking is articulated speech, travelling a solo trip instead of attending her daughter’s graduation ceremony because she’s set some priorities, would have never been possible. I’ve learnt life’s ways, its time to live for myself. For the longest time, I didn’t like myself. Everything associated to me felt like drawbacks, but now that I’ve started to love who I am, my decisions don’t seem as bad.”

People wonder where writings and poems come from, it’s from these personal experiences, or rather common experiences that one makes personal. The ability to absorb positives from the life situations that are filled with challenges reflects in an artist’s work.

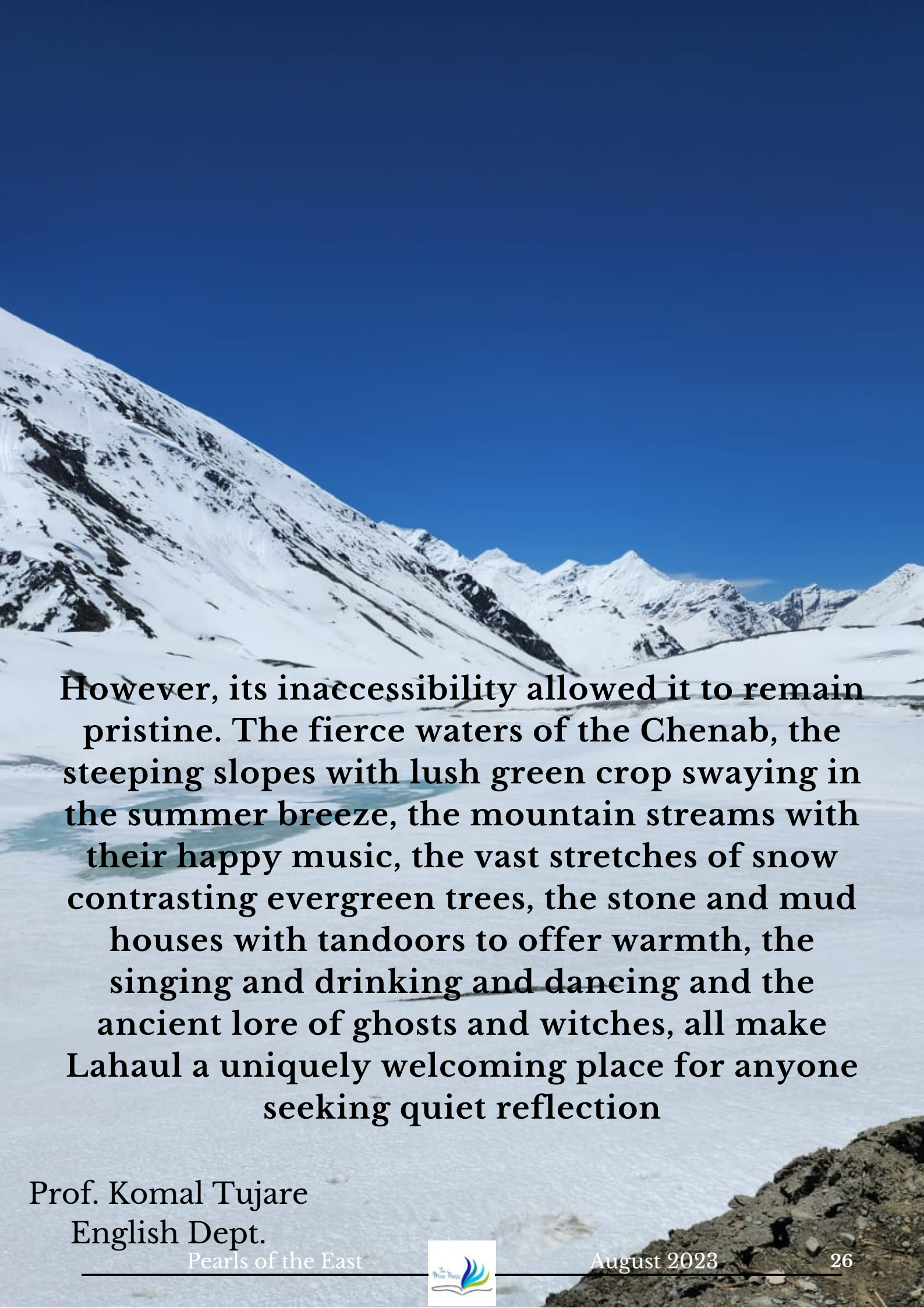


. To a privileged individual who received support and guidance throughout her life, it was a breezy journey for me to find passion. However, what about the ones who are dragged by responsibilities and expectations, who lack all support and are forced to grow up before they want to. They end up like Shashi. They find their passion while they cross their rugged pathways. The love they possess may perhaps outscore any of ours, because discovering their passion cost them so much more.

-Sania Maryam  
TYBA



Lahaul is one of the remotest places in India one can ever traverse to. Locked by mountains from all ends, it is a sublime valley filled with breathtaking sights of the glorious Himalayas. One of the many blessings marriage brought me was the discovery of this place with its unique landscape, culture and traditions. Most Lahaulis are migrants who, centuries ago, chose to brave the harsh winters of Lahaul to escape persecution in their native lands. While the valley offered them safety, it also brought its own challenges, cut off as it was from all civilisation for more than six months of the year due to freezing temperatures and snow.



**However, its inaccessibility allowed it to remain pristine. The fierce waters of the Chenab, the steeping slopes with lush green crop swaying in the summer breeze, the mountain streams with their happy music, the vast stretches of snow contrasting evergreen trees, the stone and mud houses with tandoors to offer warmth, the singing and drinking and dancing and the ancient lore of ghosts and witches, all make Lahaul a uniquely welcoming place for anyone seeking quiet reflection**

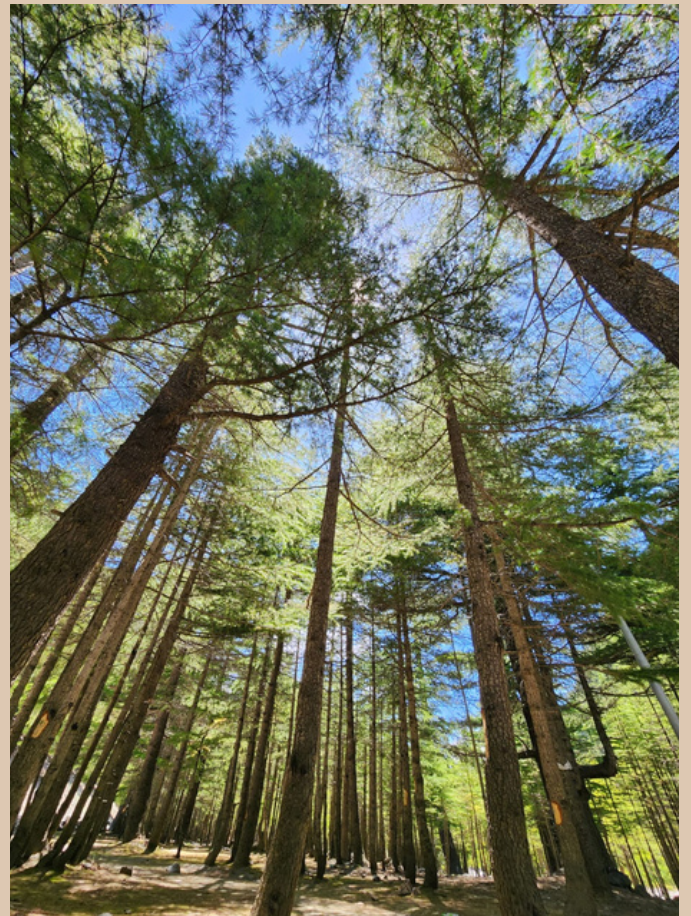
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Pearls of the East




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# Memoirs Of A Geisha

Memoirs of a Geisha is a fictional novel written by Arthur Golden. This book is a remarkable piece of sleight of hand, a novel disguised as a memoir, told in the voice of a geisha who grew up in a pre-World War II Japan. Part historical, part fairy-tale and part Dickensian romance, this book immerses the reader in an exotic world of geisha, even as it narrates the story of one woman's coming of age.

The story is narrated by Chiyo Sakamoto, a young girl from a fishing village. Chiyo is the daughter of an aged fisherman and his ailing wife. At the age of 9 she catches the attention of a local businessman, who offers to “Adopt” her and her sister and ease the family burden. Unlike her dimwitted sister, Chiyo is brighter, sensitive girl, distinguished by her unusual grey eyes. The girls end up being sold into slavery i.e., the pretty Chiyo is sent to a geisha house in Kyoto, whereas her plainer sister to a house of prostitution.



Chiyo dreams of returning home, but her one attempt at escaping is easily foiled and eventually resigns herself to her awaiting fate, where a part of her sees becoming a geisha as her only way of earning a living in 1930s Japan. A part of her admires the glamorous geisha around her, and finally a part of her sees becoming a geisha as a way to re-encounter her prince charming, a handsome businessman known as the Chairman, whose kindness and charm have captured Chiyo's heart. As Chiyo works in the geisha house with the goal to become a renowned geisha, she earns the opportunity to attend lessons in singing, dancing, music and tea ceremony, as well as lessons in the art of conversation. In the day time, there are grueling classes; in the evenings, parties and banquets, where Chiyo is introduced to potential patrons. Chiyo learns to wear the ornate costume of the apprentice geisha (including an obi that is made of yards and yards of heavy brocade). She learns to flirt with men by coyly revealing a glimpse of wrist and forearm. And she learns to apply the geisha's traditional white makeup, leaving "a tiny margin of skin bare all around the hairline," to create the artificial look of an actor's Noh mask. Soon, Chiyo the gangly village girl has become the novice geisha "Sayuri."

Through Sayuri's eyes, readers are transported into the complex and competitive world of the geisha, where beauty, talent, and wit are the keys to success. Golden's meticulous research and vivid descriptions bring to life intricate rituals, customs, and artistry of geisha, making the novel feel like an immersive journey into another time and place.

Rather than contrive a stylized, period voice for Sayuri, Arthur Golden allows her to relate her story in chatty, colloquial terms that enable the reader to identify with her feelings of surprise, puzzlement and disgust at the rituals she must endure. We learn how a young geisha's virginity is auctioned off to the highest bidder, and how a wealthy "danna" (that is, patron) is acquired by the most popular geisha. Having a danna means that a geisha has someone to look after her debts and expenses; it also means being on call as the man's professional mistress. On her way to becoming one of the most prominent geishas in Kyoto, Sayuri must contend with the evil stratagems of an envious rival named Hatsumomo, and her own ambivalent feelings about her vocation.

Will Hatsumomo successfully undermine Sayuri's reputation by spreading nasty rumours? Or will Sayuri's mentor, Mameha, thwart Hatsumomo's evil machinations? Will Sayuri end up with the wealthy and lascivious doctor who covets her? Or will Nobu, the Chairman's ugly but kind-hearted business partner, become her danna? And what of the Chairman himself? Does he harbour secret feelings for Sayuri? And if he does, can he allow those feelings to tarnish his friendship with Nobu?



Out of such blunt questions, Mr. Golden fashions a consistently entertaining plot, filled with Dickensian twists and marred only by his tendency to turn supporting characters into cartoonish heroes and villains. Hatsumomo comes across as a ferocious fairy-tale witch, her venomous hatred for Sayuri unexplained by ordinary jealousy or spite. And the Chairman, too, remains a one-dimensional knight in shining Armor, a plausible enough fantasy figure for a naive girl, but hardly the sort of fellow a mature woman would love. Despite such lapses, "Memoirs of a Geisha" holds the reader's attention, so intimate and knowing is its portrayal of Sayuri's inner life. In recounting her story, Mr. Golden gives us not only a richly sympathetic portrait of a woman, but also a finely observed picture of an anomalous and largely vanished world. He has made an impressive and unusual debut.

Arthur Golden's prose is elegant and evocative, creating a vivid atmosphere that draws readers into the world of Kyoto's geisha district. His story telling is both informative and emotionally resonant, making it easy to become emotionally invested in Sayuri's journey. The pacing of the novel is well-crafted, keeping the reader engaged from the start to the finish.



However, it's important to note that "Memoirs of a Geisha" has been criticized for its portrayal of Japanese culture, as it is written by an American author. Some have argued that it simplifies and exoticizes certain aspects of Japanese culture, and that it should be read with this in mind. While the novel provides an intriguing perspective on geisha life, it should not be taken as a definitive account of the culture.

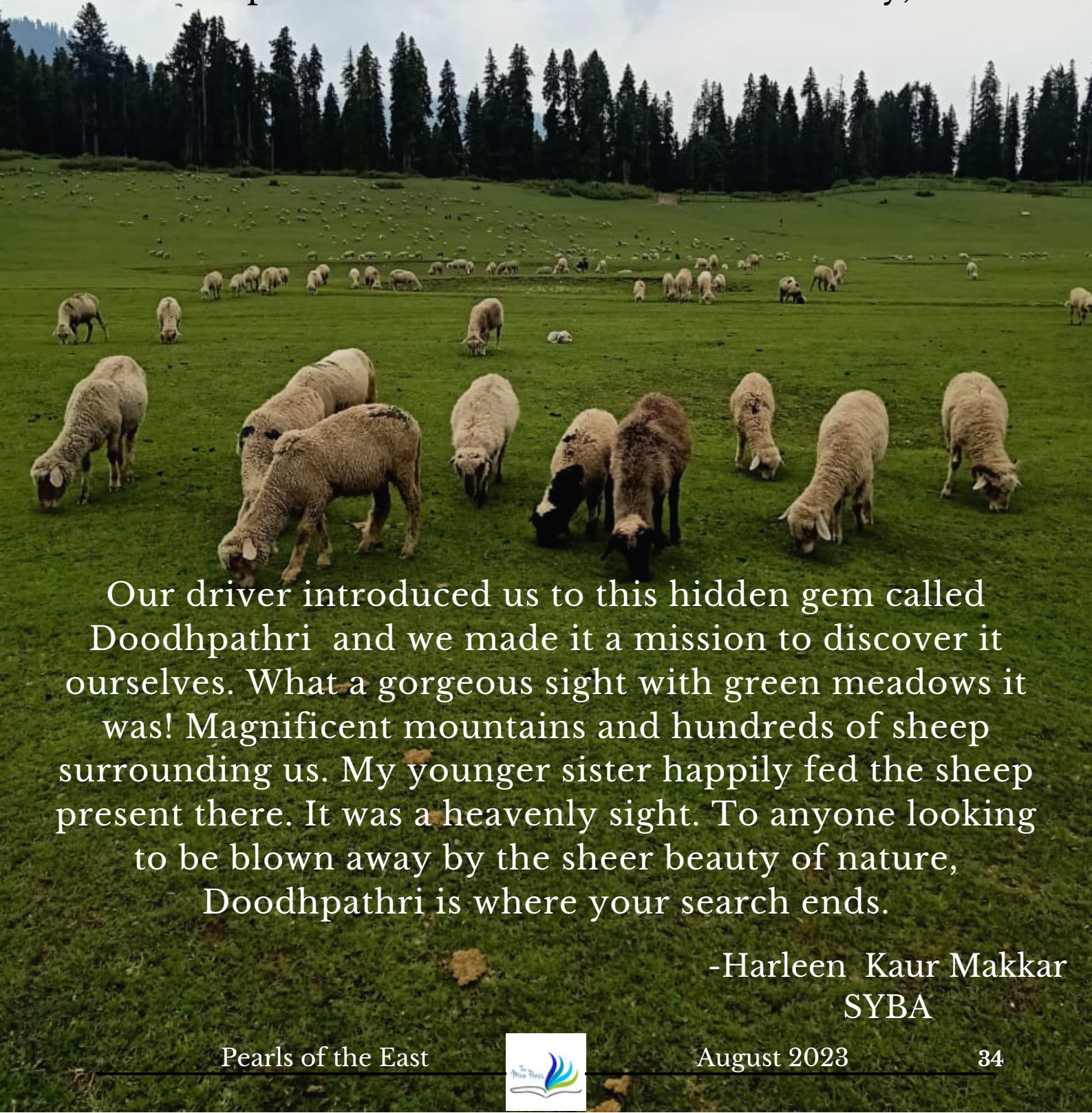
In conclusion, "Memoirs of a Geisha" is a beautifully written and engrossing novel that takes readers on a mesmerizing journey into the world of geisha. Arthur Golden's meticulous research and vivid storytelling create a rich and immersive reading experience. While it may not provide a wholly authentic portrayal of Japanese culture, it remains a captivating work of fiction that offers a unique perspective on the lives of geisha in a bygone era.

Tanvi Pingale  
TYBA



Art by Khushi Negi  
TYBA

Doodhpathri in Kashmir remains one of my most memorable destinations. Kashmir as claimed by most, is a magical place. Wherever you go within it, there is a multitude of people enjoying it at the same time and space as you. It's glory and serenity surprises you every single time. Doodhpathri is located approximately 42 km from Srinagar. I went there on the last day of my trip. The name 'Doodhpathri' literally means 'A Valley of Milk'. I experienced the bliss of Kashmir in May, 2022.



Our driver introduced us to this hidden gem called Doodhpathri and we made it a mission to discover it ourselves. What a gorgeous sight with green meadows it was! Magnificent mountains and hundreds of sheep surrounding us. My younger sister happily fed the sheep present there. It was a heavenly sight. To anyone looking to be blown away by the sheer beauty of nature, Doodhpathri is where your search ends.

-Harleen Kaur Makkar  
SYBA



# A HISTORY LESSON

A utopic vision stems from reality. A change needed in our society to be better and give comfort to all. Acceptance of the LGBTQ community was a necessary change that was long rested. In a country like India, it was surprising to see the backtrack route societal development took.

LGBTQ history in India traces back to ancient times, where diverse expressions of gender and sexuality found acceptance within the cultural and spiritual fabric of the land. The concept of non-binary and fluid gender identities was evident in the presence of hijras, a community often revered in religious contexts for their blessings. Ancient Indian epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana hinted at unconventional relationships, challenging modern notions of binary sexuality. Throughout ancient times, India displayed a remarkable tolerance towards diverse gender and sexual identities, fostering an environment where the spectrum of love and attraction was seen as a natural extension of the human experience .

In ancient literature, Sanskrit texts like the Puranas and plays by renowned playwrights like Kalidasa alluded to relationships transcending traditional norms. Same-sex unions were acknowledged as valid expressions of love and companionship, enriching the broader societal narrative.

However, with the advent of colonial rule, the British influence led to the imposition of Victorian morality, resulting in the criminalization of homosexuality under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in the 19th century.

With much protest and will, 6 September 2022 marks four years since the Supreme Court of India scrapped the law that criminalized same-sex relationships. On the historic date, a five-judge bench read down parts of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and allowed LGBTQ individuals to engage in consensual intercourse without fear of imprisonment. A win for humans all over the world. The decriminalization of homosexual relationships and its journey till the current day gives us an insight as to how Indian history was way more modern than the 'modern era' itself.

Love is love, a sacred fire,  
Burning with a boundless desire.  
No matter how two souls may be,  
In love, they find their unity.

-Gouri Shirwadkar





# Colorful Utopia



A tapestry of life entwined in the heart of a bustling city, each thread a different colour of the rainbow. The LGBTQ community bloomed like wildflowers in this brilliant tapestry, painting the globe with their stories of love, resilience, and acceptance.

Amidst Koregoan Park streets and flickering neon lights, a café called "The Voyage" stood as a haven for souls seeking connection. It was there that Aadya, a painter with a heart full of colors yet to be named, met Alex, a writer weaving words like spells. Their love story unfolded like a melody, each chapter a testament to the beauty of love untainted by norms.

Walking through the park, Aditi and Layla's hands brushed against one another's, fingers interlocking in a silent promise. They shared stolen glances and laughter that echoed through the trees, as their journey together defied the constraints of a world still learning to embrace diversity.

Rohit poured his heart out on the pages of a tattered journal, revealing the pain of self-discovery. He found consolation and power in every phrase, allowing him to be unapologetically himself. His journey reflected the hardships and achievements of countless others, serving as a beacon of hope for those navigating the labyrinth of identity.

On a stage bathed in spotlight, a drag queen named Sushant Divgikar captivated the audience with her elegance and charisma. She smashed prejudices and inspired people watching with each spin and note sang, emphasising that genuine beauty lies in the ability to express oneself truthfully.

As the sun sank over the city, throwing a warm glow over its different neighborhoods, the LGBTQ community stood together, a monument to the power of love, acceptance, and the pursuit of happiness. Every story, every color, every voice was a brushstroke in a masterpiece celebrating the boundless spectrum of humanity.





**NOT JUST A  
PHASE!**



**Hemani, my classmate, is one of the bravest person I have met in a long time. I admire and respect her for being genuine to herself. Taking this chance, I'd like to tell her to stay strong, stay true, and keep shinning brightly. Your bravery will inspire others and contribute to a more inclusive and caring society. Sending you positivity and love from me and all of the editorial team.**

**-Anna Kannan  
TYBA (A)**

# “The Outcast”

“Pyaar tenu karde gabru” is a very precise song choice for the movie “Shubh Mangal Zyada Savdhan”. Missing out on such cinematic pieces can be perceived as overlooking an opportunity of broadening perspective.

Why discuss the LGBTQ community? Why are films made about the struggles of LGBTQ members in 'Indian society' when most of us are aware that everyone has their own sexual orientation? Let me explain, The fact that we are all aware and claim to understand does not mean that we all accept our friends who announce themselves to be gay or bisexual. People in 'Indian societies' do not consider members of this community as a part of them.

Whereas in East Asian countries such as Thailand, Japan and Indonesia, as well as South Korea, the LGBTQ community is openly accepted and homosexuality is actively promoted. In India, a growing number of people are stepping out as gay and there are numerous LGBTQ+ activists and organizations in India and Asia who represent and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community's rights.

Some notable individuals and organizations are: The Naz Foundation (India) Trust is a non-governmental organization in India that works on HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ issues. Positive representation of LGBTQ+ people in the media can help to combat stereotypes and promote understanding. Its purpose is to raise awareness about LGBTQ+ issues and advocate for equal rights and acceptance.

The media educates the public about the history, terminology, and experiences of LGBTQ+ people, fostering empathy and inclusivity. It connects LGBTQ+ people, allows them to share their stories, and provides support through online forums, social media, and LGBTQ+ media outlets.

It exposes prejudice and discrimination while encouraging dialogue and change. Various cultures in India and other parts of Asia have historically recognized and even worshiped transgender people. The Hijra community in India is one such example. Hijras are a distinct social and cultural group in India who are frequently referred to as the "third gender." They have a long history in the country and have long been used in religious and cultural ceremonies. Hijras are thought to have special blessings in some Hindu traditions and are invited to offer blessings during childbirth and weddings.

However, it is important to note that the level of acceptance and recognition varies across India's regions and communities.

Their stories are frequently intertwined with Hindu religious texts and legends in Indian mythology.

One notable example is the concept of Ardhanarishvara, a deity who represents both the male and female aspects of the divine. Ardhanarishvara is frequently depicted as a fusion of Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati, with one half of the body male and the other half female. This image represents the union and balance of masculine and feminine energies.

Furthermore, in the Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic, there is a character named Sikhandi who is born female but later becomes a eunuch and plays an important role in the Kurukshetra War. Sikhandi's story is one of gender transformation and acceptance. While these stories can be found in Indian mythology, it's important to remember that attitudes and acceptance of transgender people have evolved over time, and the experiences of transgender people in modern India can differ greatly from those found in mythology.

Nonetheless, these mythological references show that gender diversity and transformation have a long history in Indian culture and religion. In recent years, Bollywood and Asian cinema have made strides in promoting LGBTQ+ representation and issues. Many Bollywood and Asian films have begun to include LGBTQ+ characters in their plots, which helps to normalize different sexual orientations and gender identities.

Some films directly address LGBTQ+ issues, shedding light on the challenges that this community faces. Movies such as "Aligarh," "Kapoor and Sons," "Badhai Do," and "Shubh Mangal zyada Savdhan" are increasingly being featured at Asian film festivals, providing a platform for these stories to reach a wider audience.

Some LGBTQ+ films in Bollywood and Asian cinema have received international acclaim and awards, drawing attention to these issues. LGBTQ+ themes can also be found in music and pop culture, such as "I wish you were gay" by Billie Eilish and Te amo by Rihanna, which contributes to awareness and acceptance. Individuals in Bollywood who have spoken out about these issues include: Karan Johar, a well-known filmmaker, producer, and television personality, has been an outspoken supporter of LGBTQ+ rights. Apurva Asrani is a gay film editor and screenwriter who recently came out. In India, he has been outspoken about LGBTQ+ issues and has advocated for equal rights. Celina Jaitly is an Indian actress who has advocated for LGBTQ+ rights.

We notice that none of these people represent the mainstream position in Bollywood, and those who do don't seem to be particularly vocal about such issues. This is an example of how LGBTQ topics and subjects can become too heavy to discuss openly without fear of social consequences. As youth of a welcoming tomorrow and inclusive approach, it is past time for us to stand up for those who require our support.

-Sofiya Shekh  
TYBA (A)

I don't know how to explain this article. As the name suggests, it is supposed to be India that is undiscovered yet discovered. The combination here seems weird, I accept but there was no other way I could explain what this photo series means to me. For me, its those moments that made me gasp, made me go- "Damn, this is India." And admire the wonders of this country we live in. Its those moments that I didn't discover before searching for it and when I did, it felt like living a literal Pinterest board life that I romanticize. Maybe it is India that is discovered by me but undiscovered by you. So, here's to those moments waiting to be discovered.

Korigad lake, Maharashtra



**I call it, the Paradise Found.**

**I mean, you don't get to sit on a shikara every day to watch  
a sunset this beautiful. Truly, a paradise found**

**Dal Lake, Srinagar, J&K**



**Speaking of Beaches...  
Diu is a good option too, just saying.**

**Nagao Beach, Diu.**





## **Fascinating Falls.**

**Add this in your bucket list: to stand at the top of a waterfall and witness the absolute masterpiece of nature's art.**

**Ripple Waterfalls, Munnar, Kerela.**



## **Cottagecore To the Core**

**I love anything that is cottagecore. So, imagine, a wooden treehouse, lots of lush greenery around, I would settle there forever.**

**Sherbaug, Mahabaleshwar.**



**That One Time When I Found the Folklore Forest  
Best to find it on foggy mornings in Kashmir, Swifties where  
you at?!**

**Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir.**



## Canopy of Calm

How would you feel walking under a canopy on a warm afternoon and no people around?

Arthur's Seat, Mahabaleshwar.



**And so many more. And even more that are yet to be discovered. This was my part, my discovery. How did you discover your India?**

**-Ashlesha Patil**

**SYBA**

# Just Keep Swimming

The topic of parenting, a course without a syllabus, has been extensively debated by experts and laypeople equally.

Although no one seems to know the precise answer, most people do have theories about it, ranging from the known experience of unidentified people to the unneeded advice from nearby aunts. Do they work, is the question we offer here.

Hello everyone! Marlin and Nemo are being interviewed at the moment!

Our awesome dad from "Finding Nemo," Marlin, will talk to us about his experience on evolving the way he approaches parenting.

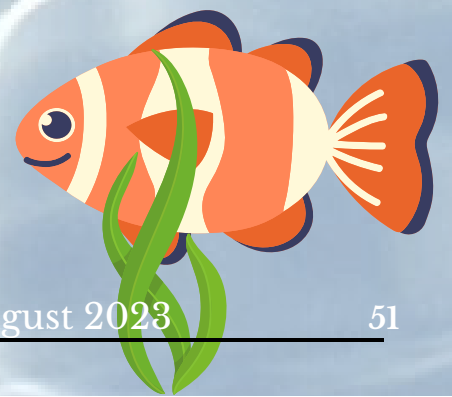
Great to have you both here!

**Marlin:** Thanks for having me! Excited to chat.

**Nemo:** Yeah, thanks for having us!

**So, Marlin, spill the beans—how was it being a dad in the beginning, and what were the hurdles you faced?**

**Marlin:** Oh boy, becoming a dad and mentor for a young mind is a rollercoaster ride. Truthfully, I was super overprotective, freaking out on Nemo's safety most of the time. I mean, I've had my fair share of sleepless nights that have made me extra cautious of how I present myself as a father now.



**So, how did your overprotectiveness cause problems in your relationship with Nemo?**

**Marlin:** Well, it did put a strain on things like communication and understanding. Nemo felt over-examined which led to him having his guards up around me, and we couldn't really have those personal talks without being in an argument. I soon realized I was holding him back.

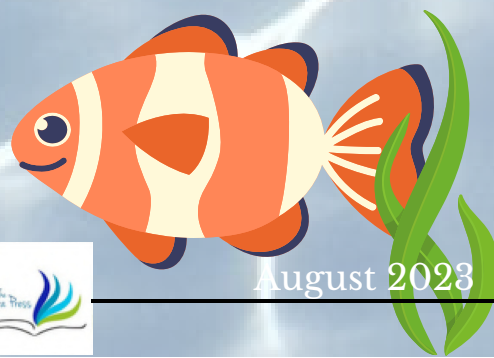
**Nemo, you were quite young when the incident at the dentist took place, what were your thoughts about your dad at that time?**

**Nemo:** I was aware of his immense care for me, but I also had a feeling that he didn't really believe I could look after myself. Although it was a little frustrating, I understood that he was acting purely out of love.

**To both of you, who do you think is a cool parent?**

**Nemo:** I think my dad's pretty cool now. He's changed a lot and is more open to letting me learn and explore.

**Marlin:** Thanks, son! I personally think Crush, the sea turtle, is an amazingly cool parent. He believes in letting his kids ride the currents and finding their way through personal perspective. It's a very difficult task to not interfere when you stand in a place of authority and immense concern.



**So how did you start changing things in your parenting?**

**Marlin:** I took baby steps, as common as this sounds, things never change overnight. Consistency and persistence of your actions make changes a part of your being. I started by letting go of my crazy fears. I realised that it's Nemo right to take risks and make mistakes, my interference in them will only make him more curious and unexperienced. Trust me when I say it's the most difficult to begin and tough to persist but when I see him in that confidence and understanding of his, that he got by involving in his own battles, it all seems worth it.

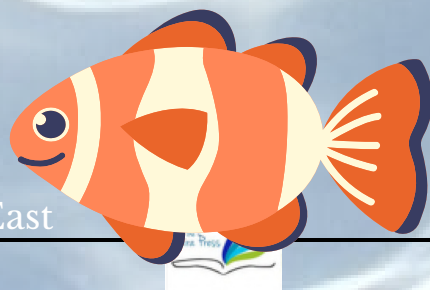
**Any cool examples of how your new approach rocked Nemo's world?**

**Marlin:** Oh, totally! Nemo joined this gang of fish for a wild adventure, and normally I'd be losing it. But this time, I backed him up. He learned so much, and it brought us closer as a tag team.

**Speaking of Dory, how does she fit into this whole parenting dynamic?**

**Marlin:** Dory brought a different perspective into our lives. Her carefree attitude taught me to be more flexible, and she's been a fun and unexpected mentor to both Nemo and me.

**Nemo:** Yeah, Dory's shown me that it's okay to make mistakes and laugh at myself sometimes. She's like a cool aunt!



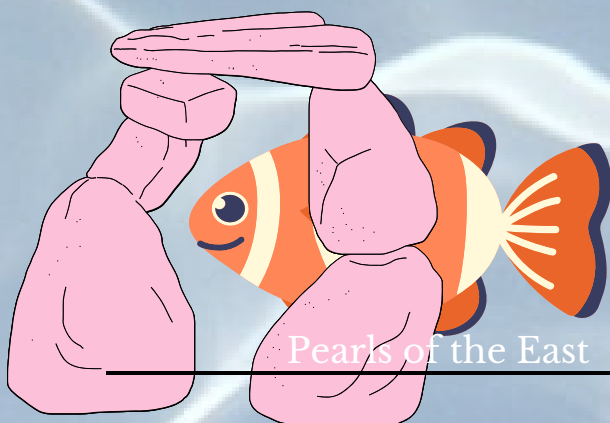


**Love the father-son teamwork! So, what's your advice for other parents and kids dealing with the same issues you both faced earlier?**

**Marlin:** I would answer this in my cool dad manner. Hello there, fellow parents—chill out a bit! Loosen a little on that tight grip, and let the kids do their thing. It's all about finding the right balance between safety and letting them spread their fins. Just believe in the good you've taught 'em and trust them to make solid choices.

**Nemo:** Hey, kids! My advice is to remember that parents might seem overprotective, but it's usually because they care a lot. Talk to them, help them understand your perspective, and show them you're responsible through your actions. And realise that it's a very difficult job to take responsibility for a new life, just like you're learning every day about the difficulties of life, so are they. Learn together. Just keep swimming and communicating!

-Gouri Shirwadkar





# Bhakhri Pizza

Take wheat flour or millet flour of your choice.

Flour 1 cup

Add pinch salt

Oregano half teaspoon

Chili flakes half teaspoon

2 spoon oil

Add 1/4 cup water and knead tight dough.

Roll a Bhakhri and cook on tawa on low flame.

Make all Bhakhri from the dough and keep aside.

Now take one Bhakhri and apply pizza sauce, your choice of vegetables and mozzarella cheese and put it in the oven or tawa for 5-7 mins or till cheese melts.

Pizza is ready to serve!!



-Hetal Gidwani  
TYBA



Art by Ananya Saxena  
FYBA



Art by Divya Khandve  
TYBA

# ARTWORKS

# RED STRING OF FATE



Red String Of Fate  
Turned 18 Last year,  
Got lonesome feelings I couldn't bare.

Until,  
I met him.

In the soft morning,  
Listening the music I like,  
Walking alone with the feelings inside.

I heard it,  
I heard the ring of those bells,  
Calling for me?

Realised it was all just in my mind,  
Uneasiness inside my heart almost made me blind.

I looked around the ring I heard,  
Then the red string appeared.

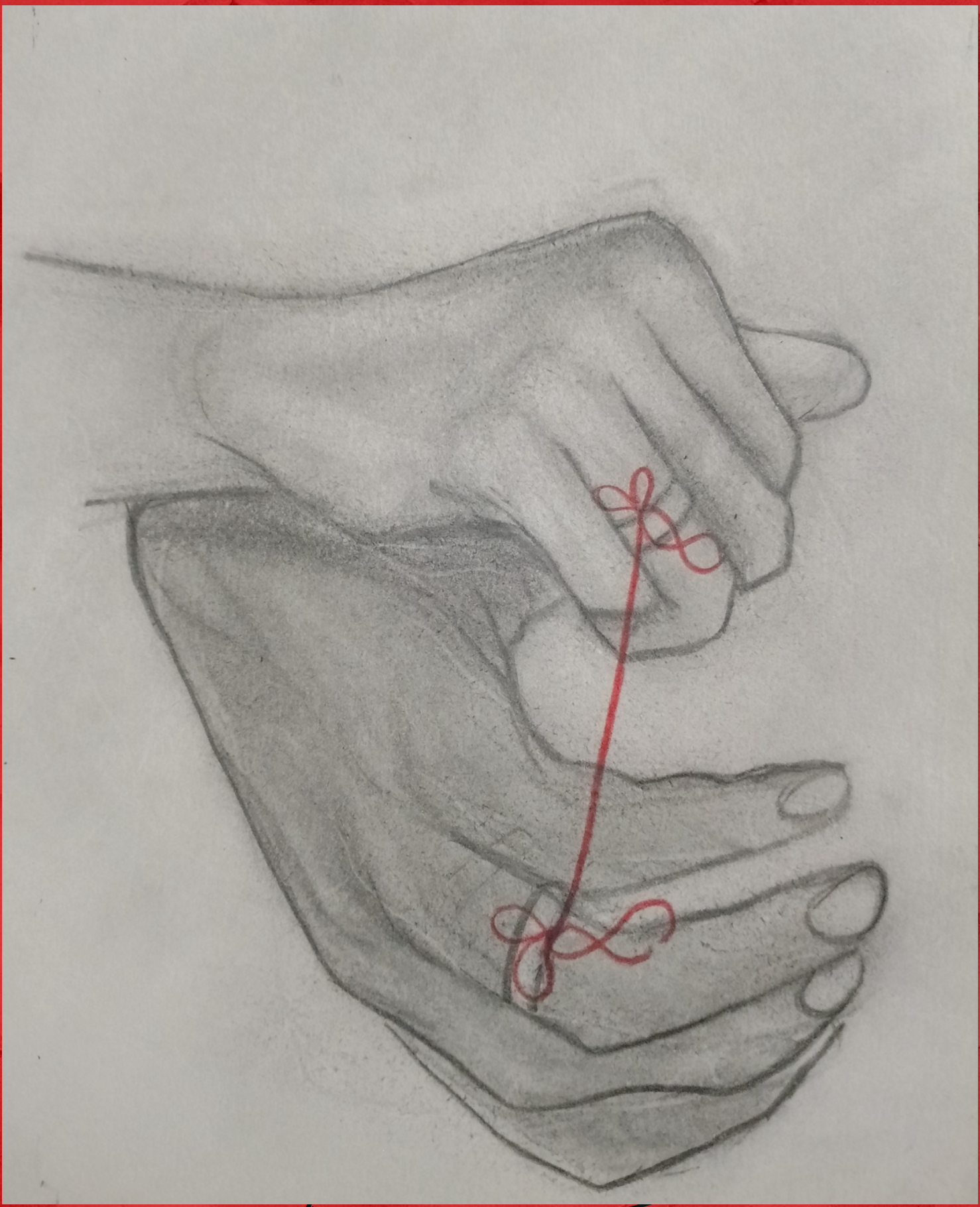
Not just our eyes,  
But fingers,  
My heart,  
And his faith.

They all were connected,  
Connected by that RED STRING.



Pov: Red String is a Japanese myth in which after a person turns 18 a Red String appears from the ring finger and its other half is tied to your soulmate and the Red String eventually leads the two empty souls to gain their fulfilment from each other.

-Anonymous



# BEBO SPEAKS

Here I am in the darkness yelling my lungs out calling for help. It is the 20th call, and I am still stuck. You might be wondering how I ended up in this situation.

My story is just like any other movie, and I am the main character of every story. So let me start from the beginning. It was just another normal day, until it wasn't. I woke up to the sound of 'Bebo main Bebo, Dil mera lelo, Dil Dene aayi, le lo ji le lo', because I am BEBO. The song was obviously not playing in reality, but it was definitely playing inside my head because I'm popular. Everyone in the college knows me very well. Although, I'm more of a grey person. Some people like me and some people don't. But that is the cost of fame.

It was quite early when I woke up and I was hungry. So, I started barking for attention until I was given something to eat. Then began my everyday adventure in the college where I go frolicking around with a smile and greeting everyone. But there were very few people in the college since it was early morning. So, I decided to go on the ground and play with the sports girls instead. They are always very welcoming and let me play ball with them. I played for a long time and then I got tired. So, I went and slept again.

Come on now, don't judge me for sleeping so much. I am a dog after all and have no better work to do except sleep, eat, play and poop. This time when I woke up, the college was filled with people all staring at me; as I told y'all earlier, I'm popular. This group of really beautiful girls came up to me and began petting me and hugging me. I was loving it and enjoying myself thoroughly. They were also showering me with words like, 'Awwww, my baby, you are so cute, I love you so much, you are such a good doggo' and so on. Then followed a bunch of words or rather sounds that even I did not understand, 'kuchu puchi munchkin, momu tuku, awlelele cutuu.' Please help me understand what these words mean because I honestly don't know.

And ladies I have got to tell you that I love the attention but sometimes when you stick too much, it gets a little annoying. A girl's got to have her privacy, right! After the beautiful girls left, I decided to go on with my second round of greeting. I usually start with the topmost floor and move my way down because the first floor has my favorite stop. I entered all the classrooms while greeting and disturbing their lectures very proudly. Most classrooms were overjoyed to see me, but some were too afraid.

So, I had my very happy session of terrorizing them too. It is just too funny when they get scared of me because I am not going to do anything, duhh! I also find it rude sometimes if I'm not lying. They behave as though I am a threat to their kind when in fact it's the other way around. Anyways, after a lot of greeting and terrorizing, I reached my favorite stop- Room. No 115. It is the place where one of my favorite teachers sits every day. She doesn't mind me doing anything at all. I go jump on her and lick her face and in return she hugs me and gives me treats always. I absolutely love that. I had my daily dose of that room and moved forward.

I was tired again and so I slept again. It was already late afternoon by the time I woke up AGAIN. There was nobody in the college except the theatre girls. So, I dropped by the auditorium to say 'Hi' to them.

Those girls always tickled my fancy. They welcomed me by chanting my name, 'Bebo! Bebo! Bebo! Bebo!' I felt like a diva until I realized that they weren't all my fans screaming my name but were alerting another girl who was afraid of me. As soon as I realized this, I began chasing that girl. This time I was not terrorizing her. I just wanted to let her know that I am no harm because I adore those girls.



But the more I chased, the further away she ran. And then the funniest thing happened. After a lot of running around, she reached the stage and made a dive onto it. It was as though she flew there. She, her friends and me just couldn't stop laughing. I am not exaggerating when I say that she flew to the stage.

She saw me smiling and felt safe, I guess. Then, everyone there came and pet me so much. My heart just melted with all the affection. I was tired because of all the chasing and yes, I decided to sleep.

AGAIN. I think we've figured out by now that sleeping is my hobby. I went behind the seats and chose the most comfortable aisle for myself and slept there peacefully.

I am awake now and stuck in the auditorium in the dark. This is how I ended up here. I am a little scared because it's been hours since I have been here. I also met a mouse here. His name is Stuart. He is very friendly. We have been talking for hours and I quite like him. He has gone hunting for food right now. I had a lot of thinking to do while I was sitting here with him. The fact that I am so loved by so many people is mesmerizing. I am a part of a girl's college where every woman is so inspiring and being a girl myself, I look up to each one. But that is a whole other conversation for another time.

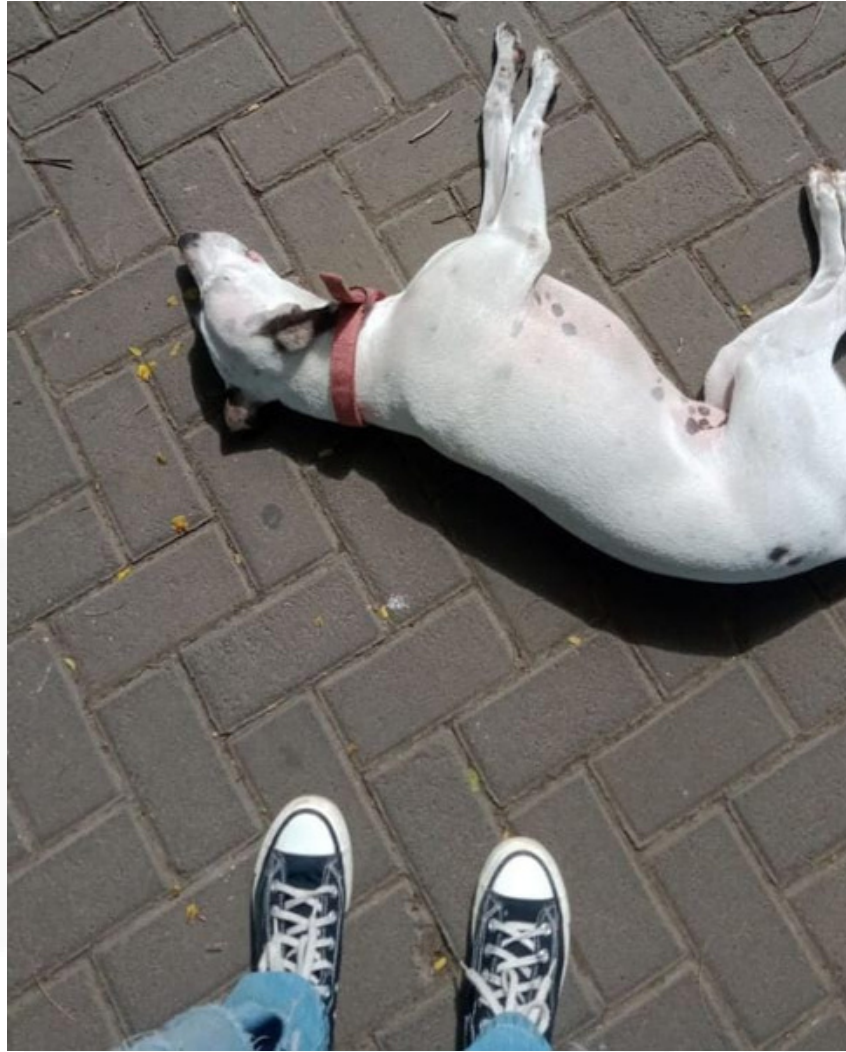
Right now, I need to figure out a way to get out of here. Oh wait! I hear someone. I think I am finally going to be out; fingers crossed. Let me go and check if the door has been opened. Promise me you will be back for the next edition to see whether I got out or not. Pinky Promise?



This is me getting attention

This is me feeling shy





**And this is me doing my most favorite thing-  
sleeping**

**Harshita Masand  
TYBA**

# C u r a t e d

# B y



**Purva Joshi**



**Sania Maryam**



**Tanvi Pingale**



**Anna Kannan**



**Harshita Masand**

