

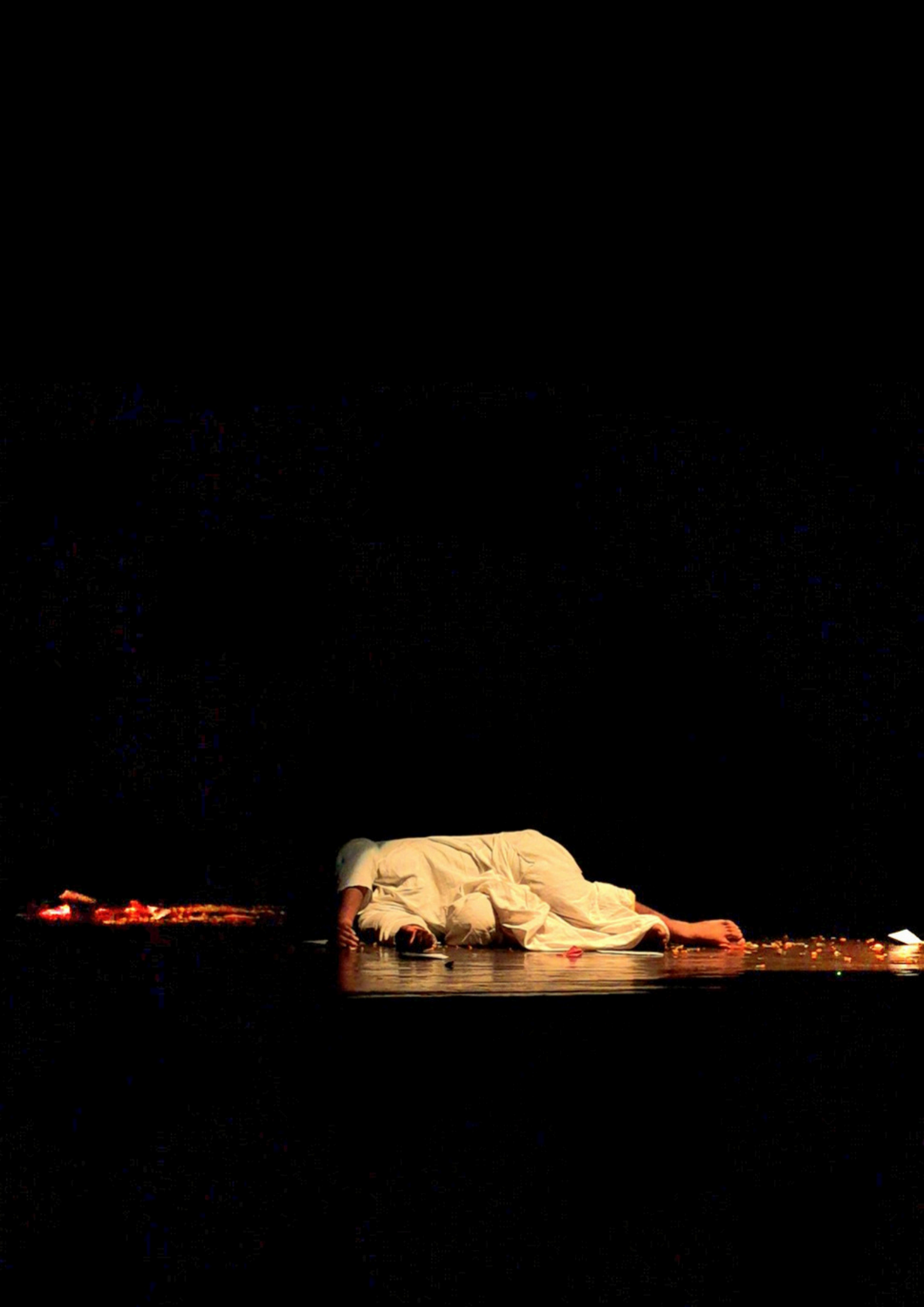
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
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KALINDI COLLEGE



Cameo

volume IX, issue II

The Mirror of Existence:
Where Flesh Meets the Infinite



Principal's note



It is truly delightful that the English Department, Kalindi College, continues to publish its biannual online newsletter, Cameo, which allows the students of the department with a platform to express their creative talents through short pieces of literary writings and artworks. I give my best wishes to the students and faculty of the English department for inspiring diverse and boundless expression of literature and art.

Prof. Meena Charanda



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Student Editorial

There are moments—quiet, trembling ones when the body feels too small to hold all that we are. A sigh carries a memory not entirely our own. A glance lingers, reaching across lifetimes for someone half-remembered. In these moments, something stirs beneath the surface. We sense it: we are more than the skin we wear.

We are not merely bodies in motion through time. We are fragments of something vaster stitched into the fabric of the cosmos, humming with echoes of before and beyond. In the mirror of existence, our flesh becomes both boundary and bridge: anchoring us to the physical world even as it whispers of what lies outside its frame.

This issue's theme invites you into that fragile space where flesh meets the infinite. It is here, in this sacred tension between the known and the unknowable, between identity and dissolution, that something flickers to life. We do not come seeking answers. This space does not demand certainty. It welcomes unknowing with reverence, holds space for the ache of being human, for a life lived in bodies that hunger, break, mend, remember, and still long for something greater than form. Our flesh, the most intimate part of us, is not a prison, it is a passage. A porous threshold through which the infinite breathes. We dissolve and reassemble a thousand times over, in the quiet revolutions of becoming.

What does it mean to exist in a universe that does not stop expanding? How do we carry both longing and letting go, both voice and silence, both presence and the possibility of vanishing?

In this issue of *Cameo*, we do not offer conclusions. Instead, we offer fragments: stories, poems, images that shimmer in the in-between. They do not tell you who you are, they reflect how you are becoming.

May these pages be a place of resonance. Not in clarity, but in the quiet immensity of the unknown. Not in certainty, but in the tender, unfolding mystery of being.



p o e t r y

The Body As A Witness

By Muskan Pal, III yr

Measuring a map on my skin
Of what once was.
A vivid dream of the sun
Clinging onto my shoulders.
I place these hands on this face and sigh—
Memory is a cadaver tied to my foot.
Every breath- a morbid reminder.

This body is a silent witness
Of all that has been endured in hiding,
Of hope persevering amidst flightlessness.



When it trembles from pain
Like a tree being struck by thunder,
I remember to waft gently
On soft clouds of forgiveness.
Despite the sorrow
Etched on my limbs—
Something about how the sea
Never fails to caress my weary feet.
Something about how
The body offers a reason enough
To cover the dugged graves again.





She Rose with the Forest

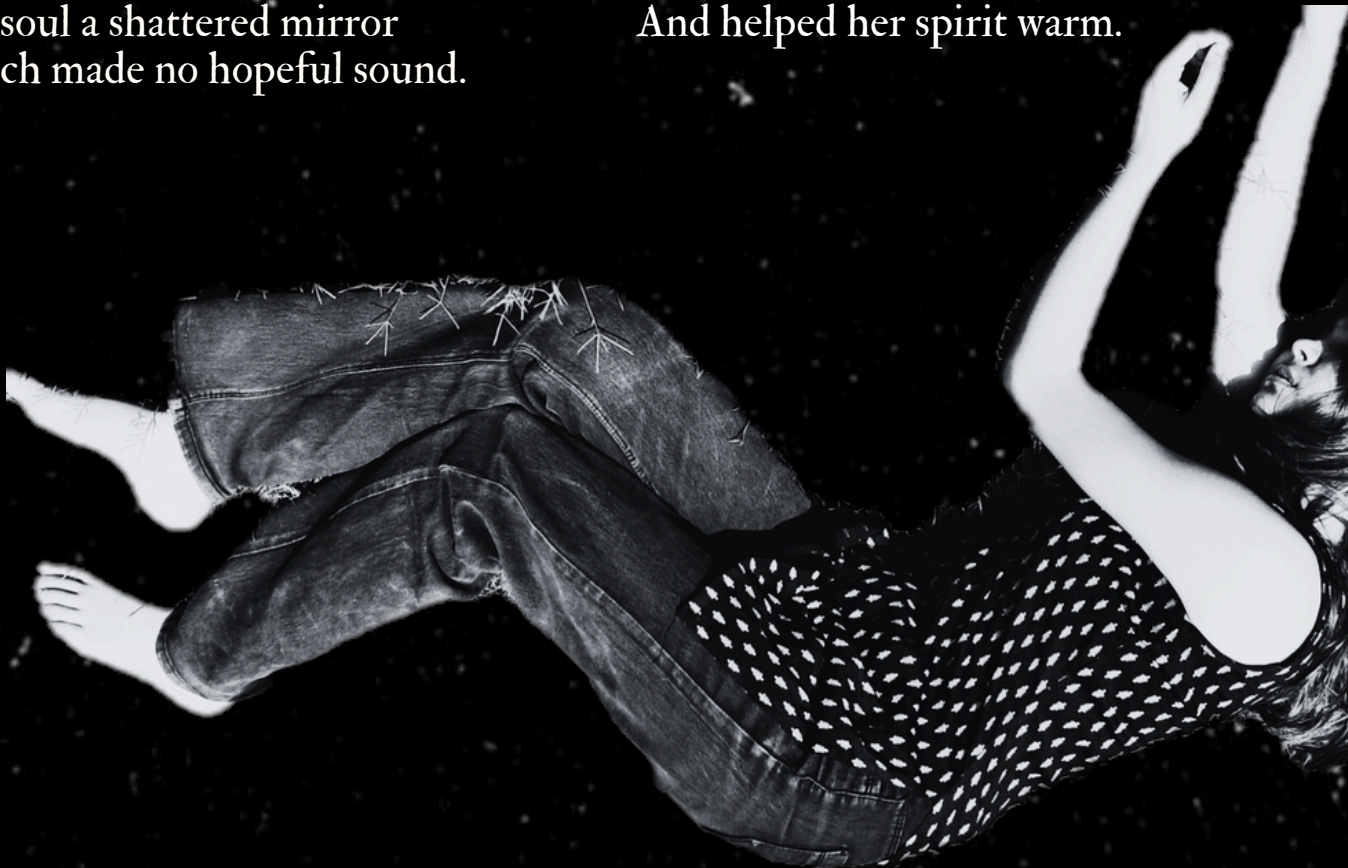
Rhythm, II Year

They called her silence,
A shadow stitched in strings;
A marionette for others'
Dreams,
Dancing to their whims and
Wings.
Her voice—a withered garden,
Choked in roots of fear and
Scorn,
Each word she dared to
Whisper met with
Thunder, left forlorn.

She walked where echoes
trembled;
Where no light kissed the
ground,
Her soul a shattered mirror
Which made no hopeful sound.

But, then the forest found her
With arms of moss and pine.
It cradled all her sorrow
And whispered, “Child, you’re
mine.”

The wind began to hum her
name
Through leaves that never lied,
The river learned her story
And sang it with the tide.
Mountains taught her how to
stand,
Unmoving in the storm,
The sun poured fire in her
chest
And helped her spirit warm.





She touched the bark of ancient
trees,
Their scars a sacred script,
And knew that even broken
things
Can bloom if gently kissed.

Now see—she walks,
No strings attached,
Her voice a rising flame,
No longer just a puppet,
But a warrior with a name.

She doesn't beg for mercy,
Nor bend for hollow praise, for
nature
Stitched her spirit
In fierce and fearless ways.

They tried to make her silent,
but
She's thunder when she speaks; a
storm
Born in the stillness—
Unbroken, Wild, and Unique.

When The Rain Reminds Me Of Her

Rhythm, II Year

It rains—and I remember,
Not the storms but soft
lullabies,
The way her sari smelled of
earth,
The shelter in her eyes.
As children, we drank her love
Like parched roots in
monsoon lands.
Our tears were wiped before
they fell
By her weathered, gentle
hands.

But, time marched in with
iron shoes,
And voices colder than the
rain,
Whispering that grown-up
hearts
Should learn to bear their
pain.
“Don’t cling,” they say.
“Don’t cry for her,
You’re old enough to stand.”

But they don't see the silent wars
We fight with trembling hands.
She still waits behind the walls,
Her love a flame, a sacred
Thread,
But custom builds a cage so
Tight,
It leaves our spirits dead.
We're told to wear a stoic face,
To speak with careful grace
While aching, just to fall once
More into that warm embrace.

They say, "Don't shame your
Name with tears,
Be strong, be sharp, behave."
But, how do we unlearn the need
For the one who always gave?

So when it rains, I stand outside,
Let droplets blur my view—
And wish her arms would pull
Me in the way
Clouds of a storm do, for
Grown-ups still need a mother's
Love though pride
May hide the ache.
We crave the rain, we crave her
Name—
And drown, for our own sake.





As Fragile As A Glass

By Kayra Tak,
III Year

Is it art itself?
Does one grant it prestige?
Individually, so ordinary,
Still above simple things.

Cautiously, I stuffed you
With scraps of paper,
Then in a box, then labelled it fragile.

Love is such a labour.
Shelf to shelf,
City by city,
Decades spent in caging you close.
Clinging to trinkets,
Sitting in a cabin, eyeing folks...

Oh, how scornful
I couldn't lament with the remains.
Nothing compares,
Nothing contains.

I stand robbed of grief.
Love is such a labour.

The Eldest

Rhythm, II Year

They gave me the crown too
early;
Not of gold—but weight and
fire.
A child with dreams still growing
wings; forged
To climb up higher.

“You’re the eldest,” they
whispered low, as if
That sealed my fate.
A role not asked for,
But handed down
With love that felt like weight.

Their eyes, once soft, turned
Measuring,
Each breath, a silent test.
Success became my only song,
Mistakes were not confessed.

They sought escape through
My small hands,
Built futures on my skin,
And every stumble I made
Plunged me deeper into sin.



Expectations dressed as care,
Praises edged with doubt,
Their silence screamed when I fell short,
Their love grew more devout—
For the child they thought I'd be;
Not the one I was becoming.
Their words became both, balm and
blade,
Their pride a quiet numbing.

“Be strong,” they said, “Be brave and
wise,”
As though I had no fear,
They didn't see the cracks form deep
Each time I drew them near.

I am their shelter, shining proof,
Their ladder out of pain— But oh, how
heavy it becomes
To bear their sun and rain.
I wish they knew the cost I paid,
How much I longed to cry,
How being strong for everyone
Made the real me say goodbye.
Yet, still I stand, not out of pride
But, love I can't undo,
A child beneath a grown-up shell—
Still yearning to be seen through.



'Grief'

Goddess

By Kayra Tak, III Year

Grief is my devoted pal.
She deceitfully corrodes my
Morale
And leaves my faint heart
Withering.
Considering the
inconsiderate consistencies,
She's mirroring,
The ever dwarfish dearth and
Swells it so much
So that my weary heart stalls.

Grief prattles on, instances
About thee...
I negotiate, I negate.
She berates the sound
Prideful I,
Allegations of fickleness rise,
as pride grows incurious
Steadily.

It's crude to recognise
Her proposal.
Pride, 'mou agápi', is
rather Distinguished
To break before faulty
senses,
I had tremendous faith in
Tenderness for thee,
But thy frigidity mauled
my Defences.

A thick brain, a deaf ear,
Another dead person in
the Barn.
Even apathy doesn't
Welcome me anymore,
Such is my grief.
My grief is such, bitter
with Agony,
Passive with Her passions,
Biting in Her fashions.
Such bitterness,
My honey spoils.

Grief is my god, and I,
Her devotee
It feels as though I kneel and
Pray to be in Her vicinity.
I let self be chided upon
The travesty of this dramatic
Mockery,
Feels winsome,
Almost virgin in its iniquity.
Akin to my kin, who
Disregards my benevolence
With such elegance,
My honey spoils.

The Sunflower

-by Riya Godara, I Year

Starting from a bud,
She began to grow.
Swinging through life,
Going with the flow.

She bloomed like a
Sunflower,
Bright and proud.
But her sun sets,
When reality hit loud.

Now, she's a withered
Sunflower,
Forgotten and sad.
Struggling through life,
Her teenage dreams are
Dead.







rose

The Tender Weight Of Being

-by Vandana, IIIrd Year

There is nothing sturdier than the illusion that we are here to stay. We move through days with a quiet certainty, acting as if our lives are solid, as if our bodies are not slowly unraveling with time. We wake, speak, fold laundry, make plans. We inhabit the moment fully, but somewhere just beneath that surface is a whisper we often try to ignore, that all of this is fleeting. That we, ourselves, are made of temporary things.

The body, for all its complexity, is so tender. A lattice of bone and blood, stitched together with breath and longing. We are vessels of memory and sensation, our skin recording every small contact, a mother's hand on a fevered brow, the brush of wind across a shoulder, the way someone once said our name and meant it. These things stay with us, though we can't always name them. They live in our muscles, in the way we flinch or soften, in how we lean toward love or brace against it.

To be human is to carry both ache and awe. It's to live with the knowledge that everything we hold can and will slip through our fingers. A voice fades from memory. A street no longer smells the way it did when we were seventeen. Someone we thought would always be there isn't. And yet, we continue. We keep showing up. We make tea. We write messages. We laugh at small things. We plant ourselves in the moment, even as time pulls us forward.

There's a strange courage in that, in loving things destined to vanish. We hold each other not despite the brevity of it all, but because of it. The fleetingness is what makes it beautiful. It is what sharpens the light.

Some days, the soul feels too vast for the body. It presses against the ribs, longing for something the physical cannot contain meaning, connection, transcendence. Other days, we become small and nearly vanish into ourselves: quiet, unsure, distant even to our own touch. But both states are part of the same truth, that to be alive is to constantly shift between expansion and contraction. Between joy and grief. Between presence and loss.

And in all of it, we endure. We become fluent in impermanence, not through detachment but through attention. We begin to see the holiness in ordinary things — the pause before a word, the light on a loved one's face, the warmth of hands clasped for just a little longer than necessary. These are the places where meaning resides. These are the soft miracles that remind us: we were here.

Perhaps we are not meant to be eternal. Perhaps we are meant to burn briefly and brightly, to leave warmth in the spaces we touched, even after we've gone. And if we are remembered, let it be not for grandeur, but for gentleness. Let it be for the way we listened. For the way we saw someone clearly. For the way we let ourselves be broken, and still chose to love again.

That is the tender weight of being:
To be fragile. To be fleeting. And to still be brave enough to stay.



I n t e r v i e w

If everything about you could change, your body, your memories, even your sense of self, do you think there's still something underneath it all that's truly 'you'? Or are we just a momentary swirl of thoughts and atoms trying to make sense of a universe that doesn't give us answers?

LAKSHAY NAGAR : Strip me away of my memories, body, or sense of self, and what will remain of me would be a reverberating echo of the impact I have had on the souls around me and the emotions I invoked in them that they might have never been aware of; some experienced a joy of soaring heights, some filled with hatred or disgust, some poisoned by my gloom; maybe someone felt content, or found quiet comfort. I'd like to assume that beneath all of this there is something in my core that remains unshaken and defines me as a person, but after some recollection, I can confidently say that I am a man of fickle nature. I can grow out of things I once cherished, or have my beliefs shift so quickly—like the people I keep close, sudden aversions, changing tastes, goals, and opinions—at such a rapid rate I disassociate for extensive periods of time. In order to fix this disassociation, I cope, and I tell myself the 'real me' or my essence is the one asking this question; the one who is experiencing every moment and, like a sponge, absorbs from it, making me estranged from my previous self. And it wears me out—I see double, but I force myself to turn away. Could it be that this is the whole point? Maybe we are here to show up, wonder, and draw conclusions and make this never-ending set of stairs.

And maybe, just maybe, the stairs don't go up or down—they just stretch with our breath, and our only task is to keep climbing, reshaping ourselves with every step. We leave behind pieces we inked ourselves with, only to scribble over them as with a growing consciousness. Perhaps the only real thread that runs through it all is this: the awareness that we are shifting, the willingness to witness the blur, and the strange, quiet courage it takes to keep going even when nothing feels solid underfoot..

Lakshay Nagar (21M)
Bennett University



Fragments

Artworks





Chitra Singh
IIInd Year



Vanshika Jindal
IIInd Year



Kanak Singh
IInd Year



Nipsy Jaura
IIInd Year



ABOUT CAMEO

The English Department is one of the oldest in Kalindi College; Known for its excellence in classroom teaching and interaction, the department offers multiple papers to its students across several disciplines that promise an enriching learning experience to the students regardless of the discipline they select. Over the years, it has organized intellectually stimulating programmes for the students through the departmental society, 'Mitrakshar' (the English Literary Society). Inter departmental programmes and fests hosted by the society have brought together students from various colleges for us to engage with, deepening our understanding of the world, strengthening our overall skills, and transforming our lives through literature.

Although the college has a number of publications, the English Department has its own online publication of which this is the ninth volume, second issue. This publication is an attempt to go beyond merely academic engagement of the students. The department enthusiastically carries on its online publication in the spirit of nurturing the innate talents of its students.



C A M E O C O M M I T T E E

Mr. SUSHRUT BHATIA

Ms. KEERTIKA LOTNI

Dr. AKSHAT SETH

D E S I G N & C U R A T I O N

VANDNA, III YEAR

NIPSY JAURA, II YEAR

ANAM NOOR, I YEAR

E D I T I N G

MUSKAN, III YEAR

KAVYA CHAUHAN, II YEAR

SAYURI, I YEAR

P H O T O G R A P H S

VANDNA, III YEAR

MUSKAN, III YEAR

C O V E R S

VANDNA, III YEAR



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