

FOURTH ISSUE

# SPARK

A STUDENT-LED CREATIVE COLLECTIVE



# **SPARK**

**Edition 04**

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Department of English and Linguistics  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

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## MESSAGE BY THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS

“Creativity is nothing but a mind set free” – Torrie T. Asai

As the Head of the Department of English and Linguistics, it is with great pleasure that I write this congratulatory message on the fourth publication of ‘SPARK- A Student-led Creative Collective.’



I greatly appreciate the immense effort made by the office bearers of the English Literary Association in completing the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the magazine- SPARK. SPARK is an expression of the authentic and artistic talents of our students. It is a carefully edited compendium of literary creations produced by the undergraduates of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, along with the contributions by the undergraduates of other state and private universities. I am delighted to thank the ELA student board for their massive contribution to make this a reality.

I sincerely thank Prof. Sudantha Liyanage, the Vice Chancellor and Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda, the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura for all the support rendered to our department in uplifting the academic experience of our students. I wish to acknowledge the commitment of the senior and junior boards for the term 2021/2022, especially to the President of the ELA- Sankalpa Kalubowila,

Secretary- Thathsarani Rathnatilake, Editor- Senali Sagara and Co-editor- Anuki Mendis for their roles in making SPARK a reality.

Finally, I convey my heartiest wishes to the undergraduates who sent their work for SPARK, the ELA of our department and sincerely wish our students all the very best in their future literary endeavours.

**DR. SUJEEWA HETTIARACHCHI**  
**HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA**



## MESSAGE OF THE PATRON

It gives me great pleasure to pen this congratulatory message for the fourth consecutive publication of the SPARK magazine: a student-led creative collective of the Department of English and Linguistics.



Launched, in 2019, as an outlet to showcase the creative essence of the student body of the Department, the magazine soon evolved into a more prominent platform catering to student creativity across all Faculties of the University. Today, it is with great pride that I note how the SPARK magazine has extended its reach to an inter-university level and for this, I congratulate the English Literary Association. Their unwavering commitment, dedication and timely deliverance have been the driving force behind this success.

I must confess, however, that this achievement was anticipated. Since its inception in 1997 under the patronage of Prof. A.J Gunawardena and Ms. Parvati Nagasundaram in succession, the Department of English and Linguistics has always been a place that continuously achieved significant milestones. The TESL program at an undergraduate level was pioneered by the Department of English and Linguistics of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ). One of the first Bachelor's degrees in English to give equal focus to both English literature and English language also originated in the same Department. The latest addition to this list of 'firsts' is the Master of Arts in TESL, a postgraduate degree offered by the Department. It underwent the successful enrollment of its second batch in 2022.

The Department of English and Linguistics has also extended the invaluable opportunity for students to pursue an undergraduate degree in English without having studied English for their Advanced Level examination. Following the orientation program, potential students are selected through a selection test.

The Department has always extended such academic support to the student body of the Faculty; I like to believe that the ELA is its creative tool that delivers unending support for student expression.

As I conclude my message, I must extend my sincere appreciation to the Vice-Chancellor of the USJ and the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the USJ for identifying the skills and talents of the students and rendering their support in making the undergraduates' creative journey a success.

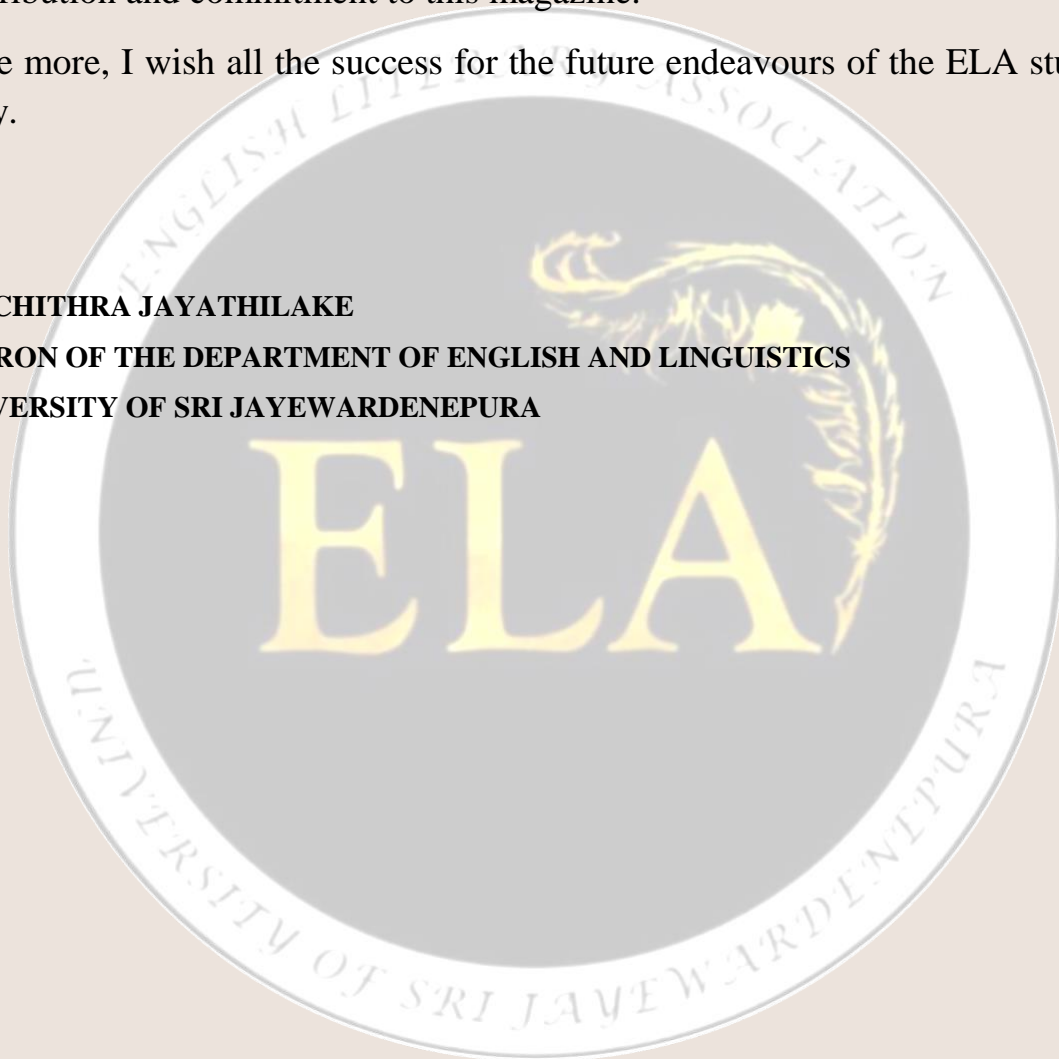
At the same time, I acknowledge the dedication of the ELA Board of members, including Sankalpa Kalubowila, Thathsarani Ratnatilake and Senali Sagara, the President, Secretary and the Editor of the English Literary Association, for their contribution and commitment to this magazine.

Once more, I wish all the success for the future endeavours of the ELA student body.

**DR. CHITHRA JAYATHILAKE**

**PATRON OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS**

**UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA**



## MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENGLISH LITERARY ASSOCIATION

I deem it a great honour to grab this opportunity to deliver the president's message for the fourth successful issue of the magazine. The SPARK magazine is profoundly incorporated with vivid vibes of creative collaborations of our dear undergraduates. The pure intention was to put forward a free safe platform for innovative presentations and creativities to retrieve sound knowledge and entertainment of language.



The fourth edition of the SPARK magazine provides a showcase of all the best ideas of students across all faculties and universities.

Moreover, we are happy to announce that the fourth edition turned out to be a resounding success, even in the midst of a pandemic due to the unvarying effort of our board members and editorial panels.

I sincerely request our readership to bear any mistakes or errors, as our collection is totally a student endeavour, which is not assisted by professional experts. On behalf of the English Literary Association for the year 2021/2022, I would like to give away my heartiest thanks to Professor Sudantha Liyanage, the Vice Chancellor of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Professor Shirantha Heenkenda, the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura for their support to this project.

Also a very special thanks goes to Dr Sujeewa Hettiarachchi; the head of the Department of English and Linguistics, the patron of the ELA Dr. Chithra Jayathilake and the academic staff on being on our side as a pillar and guiding us through this journey.

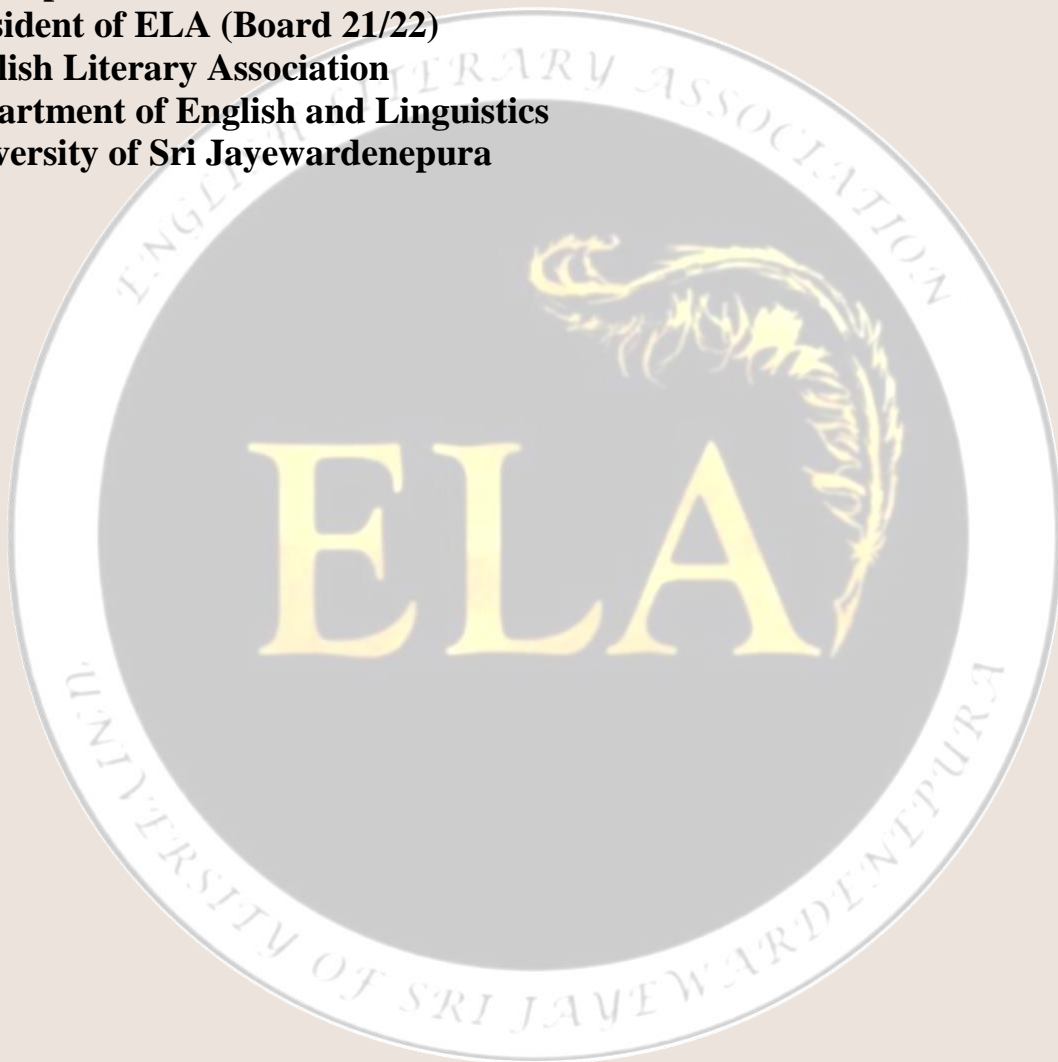
I would like to thank my fellow board members of the English Literary Association for the year 2021/2022 and the editorial committee who put forth a concerted effort for the successful publication of the magazine. I would like to leave my genuine gratitude for the contributors who gave in their creative works



to make this event a success. Thank you again for believing in ELA; the organization I represent.

As I end my chapter as the President of the English Literary Association, it is my genuine desire to witness this tradition continues beyond unbelievable levels promoting extraordinary creativity.

**Sankalpa Kalubowila**  
**President of ELA (Board 21/22)**  
**English Literary Association**  
**Department of English and Linguistics**  
**University of Sri Jayewardenepura**



## MESSAGE BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ENGLISH LITERARY ASSOCIATION

It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge this opportunity to provide a message for the fourth issue of the SPARK Magazine. The main objective of the SPARK Magazine is to provide a platform for the English and Linguistics Department students at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura who are bound as members of the English Literary Association to showcase their creative writing skills within them and give them an opportunity to appreciate their inborn hidden talents. Amidst the pandemic situation, we are proud to acknowledge that the SPARK magazine broadened the platform to the inter-faculty level and inter-university level, where we were able to share our outlet with the English Departments of our fellow universities in Sri Lanka.



The purpose of widening the scope was to build up a strong communication within our fellow faculties and universities while getting to know and learn from fellow undergraduates. Through these connections, we have found creative souls who have the urge to bring the English language to a significant level in Sri Lanka. We are grateful for the student body of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and for each and every one who contributed with their work from our fellow universities. I would like to acknowledge that the magazine is a student-led effort, where we might have unknowingly made errors, where I would like to apologize beforehand to the readership.

As the Secretary, on behalf of the Board of the English Literary Association 2021/2022, I would like to take this chance to thank Prof. Sudantha Liyanage the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura for their constant support to this annual project. I humbly thank Dr. Sujeewa Hettiarachchi, the Head of the Department of English and Linguistics and the academic staff of the Department of English and Linguistics for their mentoring and constant guidance given to us in making the SPARK Magazine a reality.

I would like to thank the President of the English Literary Association for his unwavering support in making a remarkable term this year. I would like to thank the Editor and the Co-editor (2021/2022) along with the respective editorial panel for their exceptional commitment given in creating the SPARK Magazine. I would take this chance to thank our fellow Board members for their immense contribution. Finally, I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to the creative contributors who made the magazine fill up with colour through their innovative skills.

Marking the end of my venture as the Secretary of the English Literary Association, on behalf of the President and my fellow members, I would like to say that we will aspire the SPARK Magazine to continue. It will rise beyond unimaginable levels within and outside the University scope in the upcoming years, assuring that it will always become a platform to express exceptional creativity.

**Thathsarani Ratnathilake**  
**Secretary of ELA (2021/2022)**  
**English Literary Association**  
**Department of English and Linguistics**  
**University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

## **MESSAGE BY THE EDITOR AND CO-EDITOR OF THE ENGLISH LITERARY ASSOCIATION**

We are delighted to be a part of the third publication of SPARK – A Student-led Creative Collective. It is with great pleasure that we publish the third edition of SPARK as the Editor and Co-editor of the Board of English Literary Association (ELA) 2021/2022. This significant edition expands its boundaries even further by displaying the creativity and passion of diverse authorship. The scope of the magazine grows step by step and it is noteworthy that the magazine is open for both state and non-state universities in Sri Lanka. In addition, we maintained the accuracy, consistency and quality of the magazine by rounds of copyediting.

This magazine would not have been a success if it were not for the support of some exceptional individuals. First and foremost, our heartfelt gratitude goes out to Professor Sudantha Liyanage, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Professor Shirantha Heenkenda, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Head of the Department of English and Linguistics Dr Sujeewa Hettiarachchi, Dr. Chitra Jayathilake, Patron of the English Literary Association, under whose guidance the magazine was executed. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the President, Sankalpa Kalubowila, the Secretary, Thathsarani Ratnatilake for their unwavering support, the Board of Officials of the English Literary Association and the Editorial Panel of the SPARK Magazine for reviewing and editing the literary work.

Moreover, we take this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to all the creative minds who made the effort to send us their valuable pieces of work. We applaud your talent and encourage you to make this a space for your growth. This magazine is a small rendering of the effort of our ELA team to encourage young undergraduates to treasure their thoughts and experiences and share it with an equally passionate readership. We invite you to unravel the twists and turns of the stories between these pages.

**Senali Sagara**  
**Editor (Board 2021/22)**  
**English Literary Association**  
**Department of English and Linguistics**  
**University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

**Anuki Mendis**  
**Co-editor (Board 21/22)**  
**English Literary Association**  
**Department of English and Linguistics**  
**University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

## EDITORIAL TEAM



**Senali Sagara**  
Editor 2021/22



**Anuki Mendis**  
Co-editor 2021/22

### Panel 1



**Sankalpa Kalubowila**



**Shazna Ameen**



**Dinuli Francisco**

## Panel 2



**Navindu Thiwanka**



**Kalani Abeywickrama**



**Gagani Gunasinghe**

## Panel 3



**Ruth Fernando**



**Binuri Dissanayake**



**Jasra Jaufer**

**Cover Page- Senali Sagara**

## **THE ENGLISH LITERARY ASSOCIATION**

The English Literary Association, founded in 1998, is a student-led non-profit organization of the Department of English and Linguistics, where the talents of young undergraduates are showcased through various activities organized by the club.

The three pillars of the Association: Free Speech, Open Dialogue and Creative Expression are represented through the Uni Wits sessions, the House of Commons sessions and the SPARK magazine respectively.

The past and the current members of the English Literary Association have immensely contributed in making these three pillars bring up to a remarkable standard.

The SPARK magazine has helped the young undergraduates of the Department of English and Linguistics and the undergraduates of our entire university acquire a platform to express their passion for literature and English language skills along with their creativity.

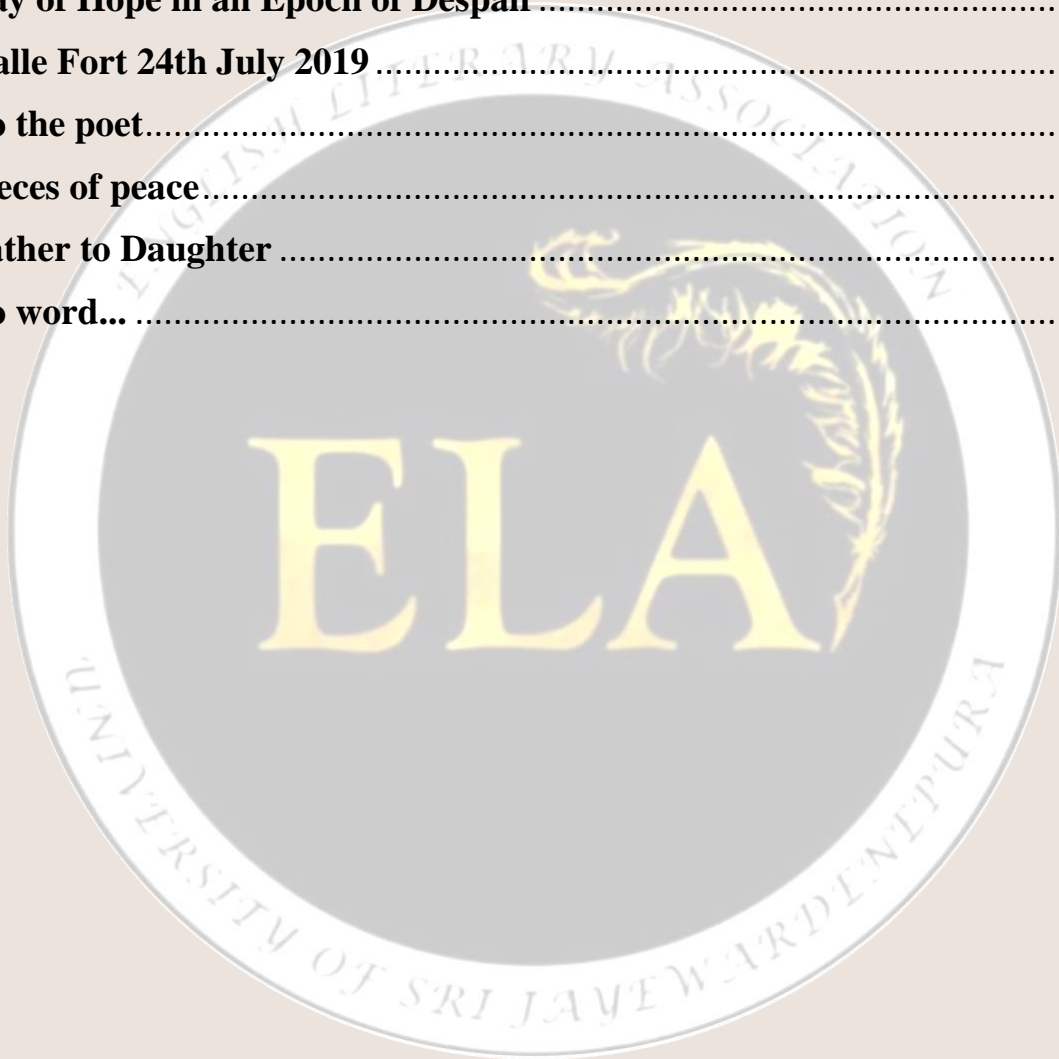
The ELA Board 20/21 are proud to present the 3rd edition of the SPARK magazine to our members and to all our university's undergraduates.

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## The Story Behind

'A shameful boy'

Male crying!

'A prostitute'

a mother of two, living alone.

'Disgusting'

Shouted the gray hair

at a clinging short-hair pair.

Above, the world;

The globe of ego,

The demolition of humanity,

The criticism of each speck,

where the truth lies deep.

People being so rude;

bearing the blades of brutality.

'Sincerity', 'The faith'

always stand apart from reality.

Mankind; so unkind, selfish at the same time.

But, do you know?

The 'reality' I mean.

Always rhetoric!

But this is to turn,

To think about others around.

To ruminate the facts.

The smoke is there

Only as of fire.

Effects and reasons,

Move on a railway.

And always remember,

A Story is behind.



Binuri Dissanayake  
Second Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

## Blank Space

Staring wide open into a blank space, I now recall many ways on how I have lost myself amidst known and unknown individuals and environments.

Defining myself through others was known to me as my identity.

Yet, Somewhere in the journey, I got to know that I have lost my self-esteem, my self-respect and my identity whilst being defined through others.

Epiphanies of tormented memories come crashing through my eyes, acknowledging that I have lost the most beautiful years of my life, serving people who don't deserve me and my efforts.

I must say...I am physically and mentally drained and broken into uncountable pieces.

I am just tired.

Yet, they never stop.

Those dark memories

They never stop...

Tani Thilakaratne  
Fourth Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

# DUALITY Vs REALITY

On the stage of life  
We just act  
Not to survive  
But to pretense

In the struggle of life  
We are being judged  
Not by reality  
But by the duality

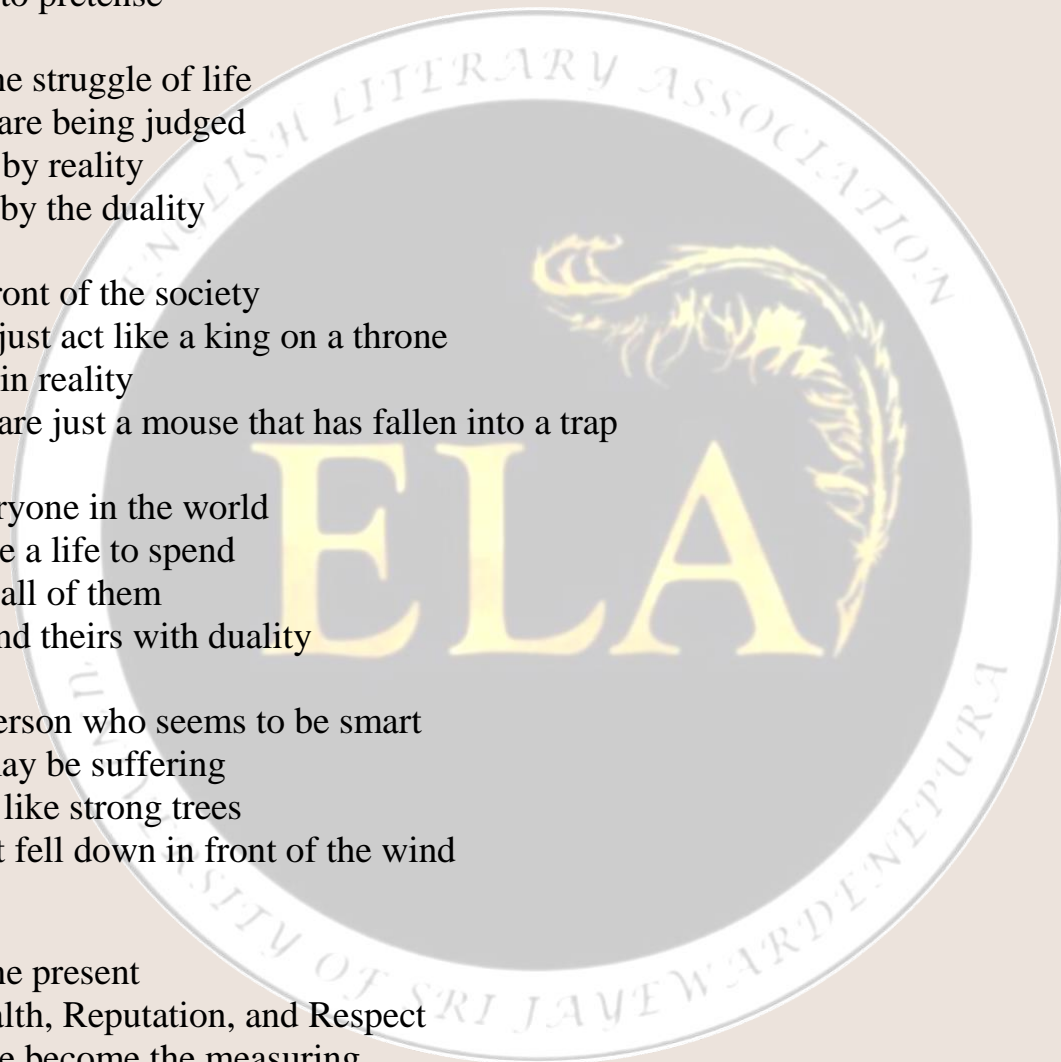
In front of the society  
We just act like a king on a throne  
But in reality  
We are just a mouse that has fallen into a trap

Everyone in the world  
Have a life to spend  
But all of them  
Spend theirs with duality

A person who seems to be smart  
Is may be suffering  
Just like strong trees  
That fell down in front of the wind

In the present  
Wealth, Reputation, and Respect  
Have become the measuring  
tape of The greedy human race

We need to realize  
All people are not good  
But all people are not bad either  
They just pretense whatever they want



At last,  
Life is not a reality  
It's only a drama  
Directed by duality

Kavithma Gunaratne  
First Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura



## Flamingo Pink

Flamingo pink.

Flamingo pink was the color of the little box I used to have that Papa gave me when I was 10. I had it filled with all the necklaces I liked, bracelets that Papa bought and my Mommas earrings. It got a broken lock when I was 15, and stolen when I was 16.

Flamingo pink.

Flamingo pink was the color of the car I'm driving. Vintage, it seems. I don't have time or the desire to give a fuck. I like it, I think it's a Ford, those old ones that had rectangles everywhere and girls with puffed-up hair, colorful hairbands and short dresses drove with their James Dean into the sunset in the movies.

Flamingo pink.

Flamingo pink is the color of my sunglasses, rounded Gucci, it says on the side. I look around as I'm driving. "You always see the world through a pink pair of sunglasses, princess, never change." Papa told me on his final night, on the night I found Momma forever asleep, laying in the strings of white powder. She looked like a snow queen. I wanted to tell Papa.

Flamingo pink.

Flamingo pink was the color of the softest sheets I've ever laid on. According to Sam, it was from Egypt. I asked whether he had seen the pyramids and he laughed and promised that we'll go and started kissing my neck as I examined a necklace he wanted me to wear. And then I asked why he wanted my forgiveness as he pointed out a black color mark on my thigh. I told him that I wasn't angry.

Flamingo pink.

Flamingo pink is the color I see above and ahead, it's the color that the man above has painted the sky with. Nana has told me that he's the one who gave me the good life so I should always be thankful to him. She caressed my cheek and told me that in their good life, people should try to do good things and to love those with whom they spend their good life

Flamingo pink.

Flamingo pink is the color of my favorite shirt on him. He looks so handsome and it makes me blush, thinking about how he sometimes lets me sit on his lap when he's discussing things I don't understand but I listen to. Sam looks like he's asleep but is dashing in any shirt at any time. But this one covers up the bullet wound nicely.

I place one hot kiss on his cold cheek, leaving a mark in the color of Flamingo pink.



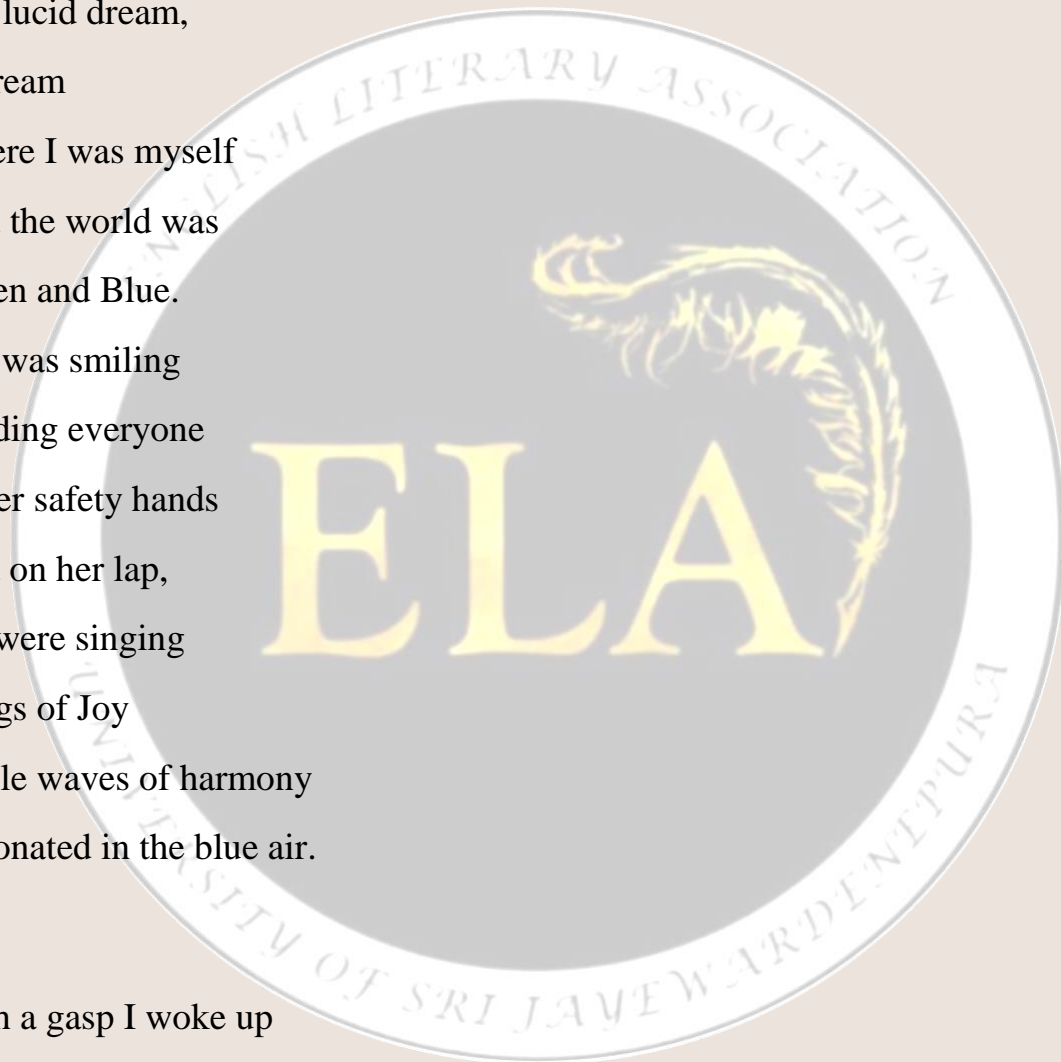
Amani Nilar  
Second Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura



## Resonating Waves of Harmony

I was lost  
In a lucid dream,  
A dream  
Where I was myself  
And the world was  
Green and Blue.  
She was smiling  
Holding everyone  
In her safety hands  
And on her lap,  
All were singing  
Songs of Joy  
While waves of harmony  
Resonated in the blue air.

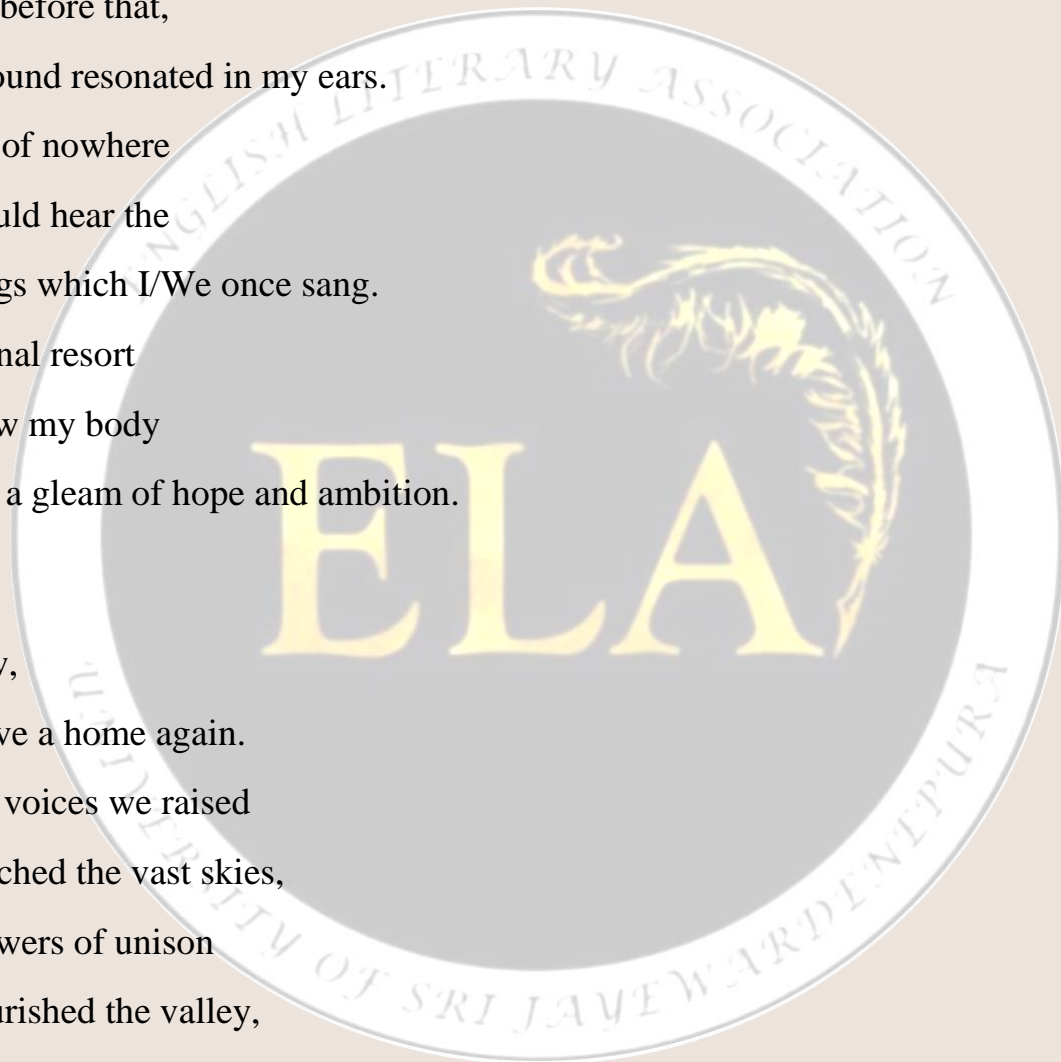
With a gasp I woke up  
And all I could see now  
Was a Black cloud  
That covered the blue skies.  
With no more strength  
I looked beyond the skies,  
I lost my desire to dream,



And closed my eyes  
For eternity  
Thinking I would find  
A peaceful home at last.

But before that,  
A sound resonated in my ears.  
Out of nowhere  
I could hear the  
Songs which I/We once sang.  
A final resort  
Drew my body  
Into a gleam of hope and ambition.

Now,  
I have a home again.  
The voices we raised  
Touched the vast skies,  
Showers of unison  
Flourished the valley,  
While Grape Hyacinths  
Covered the darkest spaces  
Of loneliness and hatred.  
No fence could detach the  
Bond we shared,  
I could see my beautiful home again



Where waves of harmony  
Resonated in the blue air.

S.M.D.E Fernando  
Second Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura



# The Blessing

Up in the Sky,  
Lord Buddha Resides,  
Down in the street,  
The Sacred tooth relic  
Inside the magnificent casket  
On the Majestic Raja,  
"The Blessed Elephant"  
Surrounded by  
The thousands of Dancers  
with cultural elegance  
Oh! What a beautiful sight.  
All the chaos in the country  
All the fears of uncertainty,  
Will disappear certainly  
By the sight of this blessed scenery.

Hasini Wijethilake  
Second Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

## You are safe in me

Upon my rough arms  
You lie so calm  
The painful eyes of fear  
Where is the adoring smile!  
Lying through my chest  
You are safe in me, my son...  
My heart aches  
For you all; the sons  
Of whom the parents are with God  
Yet, you are safe in me...  
The pain has gone my son...  
Show me the smile in your eyes  
Though the war devil  
Mocks at you,  
Never let your smile fades  
Within the peace; the warmth  
All for you, my son...  
May you be blessed  
With books and a kind heart.

Through the dark shades  
Find the love;  
The eternal wealth,  
My son...

Chirasha Charmee Kalahe  
Third Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

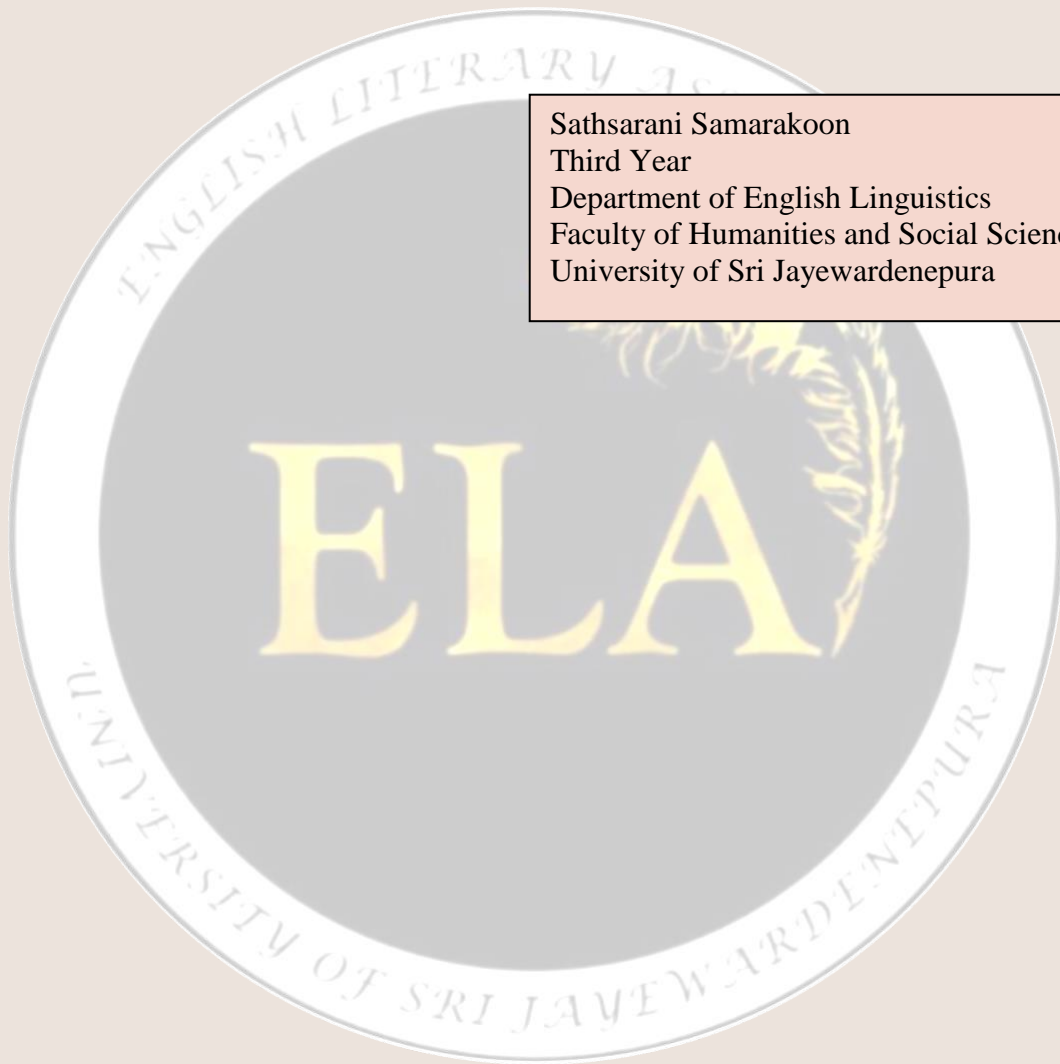


## Il Pleut

'Il pleut' inside her heart  
Languidly and lucidly  
Whilst her pain remains everlasting.  
'Il pleut' patting the ache  
Whilst her sorrow gliding down  
Trust me, it's just the rain  
That makes her wet  
Not with water but with tears of regret.  
Her memories are melting  
She knows she's hurting  
But she always loved the rain.  
Irony?  
Yes, she knows it  
The cold numbness and tingling feeling  
Touched the soul underneath  
'Il pleut' upon her flawless mind  
Like a lullaby that pours her heart out.  
Softly kissing the emotions that are sleeping.  
Il pleut, Il pleut  
She stares at her empty grave of six years  
Whilst silently lying.

Waiting  
Like a thunder, a wiggling whip cracked  
Reddish-orange, yellowish-brown  
Colors spotted.  
Waiting to hear the drums beating,  
Echoing far across the dusky hills  
Waiting to see your orange fire,  
Sparkling beyond the twinkling sky.

Tuskers, elephants, glittering,  
Dazzling like the diamonds  
Sprinkled through the sky.  
Fire breathers, whip crackers  
Causing my heartbeat to a tear  
Tears of joy or tears of sorrow?  
Figuring out on the corner of my pillow.



Sathsarani Samarakoon  
Third Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura



# Isolated

I wandered around feeling lost and  
lonely,  
Like an alien banished away from its  
home. Crows of people push past  
me,  
But no one realizes that I am all alone.

I wonder whether I am  
invisible? Or a ghost-filled  
with human flesh?  
Why is it that no one sees  
me?  
And treat me like an animal caught in a mesh.

Sometimes I am pushed in a  
corner, While my peers turn  
around to chat. Every time I  
try to share my opinion,  
They wave their hands as if swatting a gnat.

I see life through a different  
lens. My talents are  
extremely rare.  
I am as significant as a cloud,  
Which no one notices is  
there.

My message to those like me,  
Is, 'Don't let this be your worry,'  
One day the world will see your beauty,  
And those who isolated you will be sorry.

Indy Miltaso  
Third Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

## Pray for god

Who says we are all still fenced on a small island? They are unaware of the real wonders of a wonderland. Please, blow your own trumpet of the great history. Yell that still we are in a third-world country.

Help our almighty god to keep going on that record. After 30 years, his slaves flared the lion's sword. All hail the mighty king of our gods in heaven. If not, how could slaves have a holy island alone? For

the sake of pure god, still we are all- surviving. Let your blind eyes see what's really happening. Brave lion renders real peace in his white flag. Come on, pray more for god's life to be long. My comrades, let's pray for us to rest in peace. Always forgiving is divine and to err is human. That's why god opens the gates for prisoners. Grab out your idle souls from the comfy zone.

Your slender body must survive without food. Yes, that's the only way to prove your real lion. Don't be a savage by forgetting our gods' lesson.

By all means, nothing but family must be everything.

## Pray for god...

Here I am talking about the current situation of Sri Lanka. Normally we say “pray to God”. But here I am talking about our politicians. Here I’ve used “for” because I need to imply that we have the power to fetch politicians to the parliament.

Normally Gods stands for us but here we stand for politicians. That’s why I used

„for“. And sarcastically I ask our people to vote politicians more and more.

Here I say now our lion is not holding the sword but a white flag as our country has reached the death rate due to the Covid-19 virus.

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# Anna Karenina, Tolstoy and I

A reflection on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia

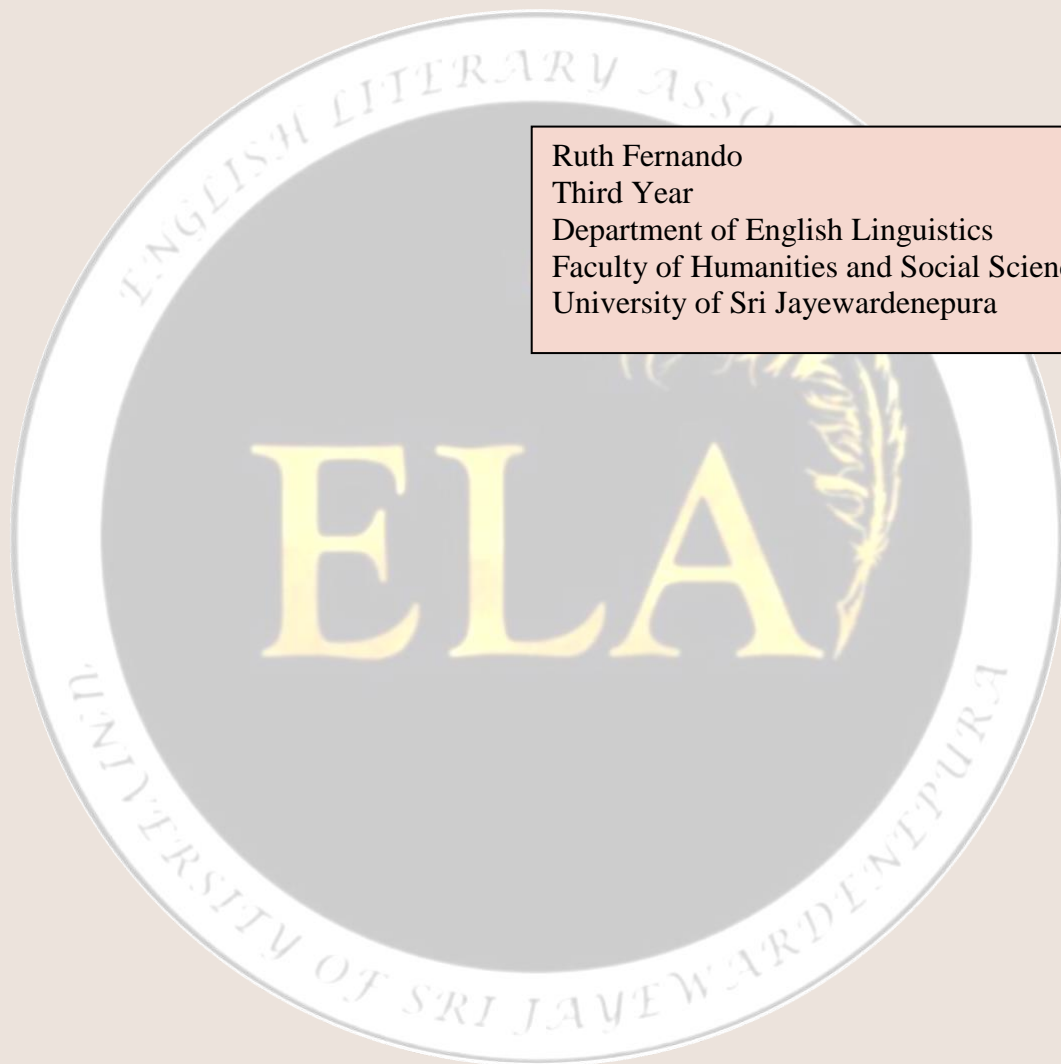
There is always something hauntingly beautiful in the name ‘Anna Karenina’. One of the most ravishing women who dazzled not only Russian society balls but also world literature for decades. Even Tolstoy bore a special fondness for her, which is why he called that Anna Karenina was his “first true novel”. It meticulously tackles the themes of family, marriage, love, adultery, and guilt against the backdrop of Russian cultural and political revival.

Tolstoy fascinatingly captures the breadth of human psychology in the novel. But what does it say about contemporary Russian society in the 19th century? Tracing through the storyline and the characters that echo the societal ideologies, I think that ‘Anna Karenina’ is not just an illicit romance between a woman and a man. It is a captivating story that seizes social upheaval. To begin with, the story takes place during the social reforms of Tsar Alexander II of Russia. We have the emancipation of serfs which marks a crucial change in Russian society as it paved the way for the bourgeoisie. Then, we find Russia in its first steps towards modernization. Levin, the novel’s co-protagonist, whose importance lies only second to Vronsky, is keen on agricultural development in Russia. His idea that European agricultural reforms might not fully impact Russia, validates that Tolstoy was dealing with 19th-century social issues.

This classic period piece reveals more about the society when it comes to the moral issue of the story, which is *adultery*. Extramarital affairs were scorned severely. When Anna and Vronsky succumb to passion and violate the moral codes, Vronsky could still float into the society without trouble, unlike Anna who is regarded with contempt. This shows the unfriendly and rigid social response towards women who accompanied the hedonistic pleasure of men which was prevalent in the society and reveals the social hypocrisy. Culturally, Anna

Karenina centres on the aristocracy. Luxurious balls, lavish dinners, and breathtaking country estates were very much part and parcel of this society. With an abundance of visual imagery, Tolstoy's detailed description of the ambience brings out the aristocratic lifestyle.

In conclusion, why people continue to read this book lies within the sole fact of it having every possible theme that the world needs. Even after two centuries the statement "happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its way" bears value. And that is why I love it.



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## The Duty

Zara never thought her mother could be so heartless. She knew that her father could be, at times. She knew he always had different plans for her, but her mother—she was too innocent and righteous to come up with such a vile plan. Her mother had always supported her. She had let Zara read the scraps of newspapers that lay around the house after serving their brief purpose as bread wrappers. She even brought her cheap copywriting books behind her father's back. But she had betrayed her. It didn't take much time for the grim realization to hit her. Zara's mother was a dutiful wife, and she was obeying her husband. Zara, as a dutiful daughter, must abide by her father's wishes, no matter how cruel and impractical they sounded.

The problem arose the other day when her father unceremoniously announced that she was to be married to Javad Karim, a youth from the neighbourhood. It was the best and the only choice for her. Almost all of her friends were married and raising families, there was no reason why Zara should wait.

The conversation neither lasted long nor went well. Her father even reached for the belt. Zara begged, pleaded, and wept by her father's sandaled feet. It was her mother who dragged her away before the goatskin belt landed flat on her back.

"There's no use," her mother had said, "It's been planned already. Don't disgrace us by doing anything stupid"

"But why?" she had asked.

Her mother could only sigh, "Your *duty* is to get married, have kids, and raise a family. Have we ever asked anything more from you?"

The best answer Zara could give was to remain obstinately quiet.

Now sitting by the windowsill, her eyes still swollen and red from crying, her nail beds bleeding from biting, her nose wet and running, she kept thinking. She had never thought so hard in her entire sixteen years of life. And never had her mind felt like a void, useless without any promising thoughts.

She contemplated running away. *But where? To whom?* She couldn't run to relatives. They would hand her back to her father like a rag doll. She couldn't run away from her friends. They had their own families to deal with, and she couldn't count them to bear her grievance. She couldn't run away to the town.

She had never been away from the village. The thought of leaving her home scared her nevertheless. No, running away was not an option. Then what could she do?

She couldn't take up a profession. No, that was a sin. Zara had no education, at least not a proper one. None of her family had the luxury of having an education. Her learning was limited to what she had learnt arduously reading from the newspaper scraps and copywriting. She sighed to the dirty window panes, briefly misting them with her breath. She knew that girls in town worked, had money, and lived independent lives.

To be born a girl was bad enough, but to be born a poor girl was worse.

Outside little girls and boys ran, tumbling against one another. It won't be long before they stop playing, she thought, catching the glimpses of boys and girls hand in hand chasing stray dogs, rousing dust in the dirty lane. She saw Javad's thirteen-year-old sister Raya and mother walking down the lane. Zara silently prayed that the entire Karim family would fade away into the air so that she'll be spared of matrimony. But if not Javad, then her father will find someone else to sell her off. In that case, Javad seemed a better option. She knew him, at least by name and face. He was twenty-three. Eldest of five. Tall and slender, square-jawed and handsome. A scuffle beard touched his chin. He was everything a girl could ask for. She remembered her friend Mina telling her that she wouldn't mind marrying Javad. That was two years ago. Now Mina was married to a merchant, and Zara was the one stuck with Javad.

Bitterness clung to Zara. *Why?* She asked herself. *Why does it have to be like this?* But it wasn't just her. Her mother had been through this, her grandmother before her, and her great-grandmother and so on. Zara knew the world rotated, and this was nothing different, an endless cycle going on and on. When will it end? *Never.*

She closed her eyes and tilted her head to the window pane. In a matter of a moment, she found herself in town then. A beautiful place. Buildings rising high. Vehicles moving instead of carts. No stray dogs but dogs on leashes, walked by men and women, emotions wiped out of faces. She sniffed the air catching the scent of fresh food; garlic bread sprinkled with sesame seeds, sauced meat, and spiced curries. Her mouth watered instantly as she discerned each smell caressing her nostrils.

Was it what heaven looked like? Colourful and carefree?

Girls in uniforms walked hand in hand, carrying bags, books, and files. They looked intelligent and independent. They wore clean clothes and smelled nice, like the blooming bushes of roses in the backyard of their dingy home. Was it their perfume or do they smell like roses?

She stood on the pavement, eyes darting from one thing to another. Somewhere in the distance, she heard a saucepan falling with a clamour on the floor.

"Zara! Zara!" someone shouted her name.

Who could have known her name in town?

“Zara!” the voice distinctively sounded like her mother’s.

“Zara! Wake up girl!” a rough hand shook her.

She opened her eyes to find her mother leaning, the spoon with which she had been stirring the curry was still in her hand. It must have been that I dropped the saucepan.

“Have you no shame to sleep like that? You are to be a wife soon. Come help me with the cooking,” her mother said.

Zara’s thoughts raced. The town, the food, the girls—was nothing but a *dream*. She had been innocently feeding on a dream. And it will always remain a dream and nothing more. She sighed. This was her place. Girls like her should remain in places like this, obscured and controlled. Standing up, she wiped her nose on her veil not caring if it got snotty. Then, adjusting her chemise, she decided to embrace her fate.

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## Epitaph to my dog

Sleep well in my heart  
and wake up when I die.

Dawn was cruel,  
and you were gone.

Chill cold air brushed against my face.

Blood ran in my veins,  
but not yours.

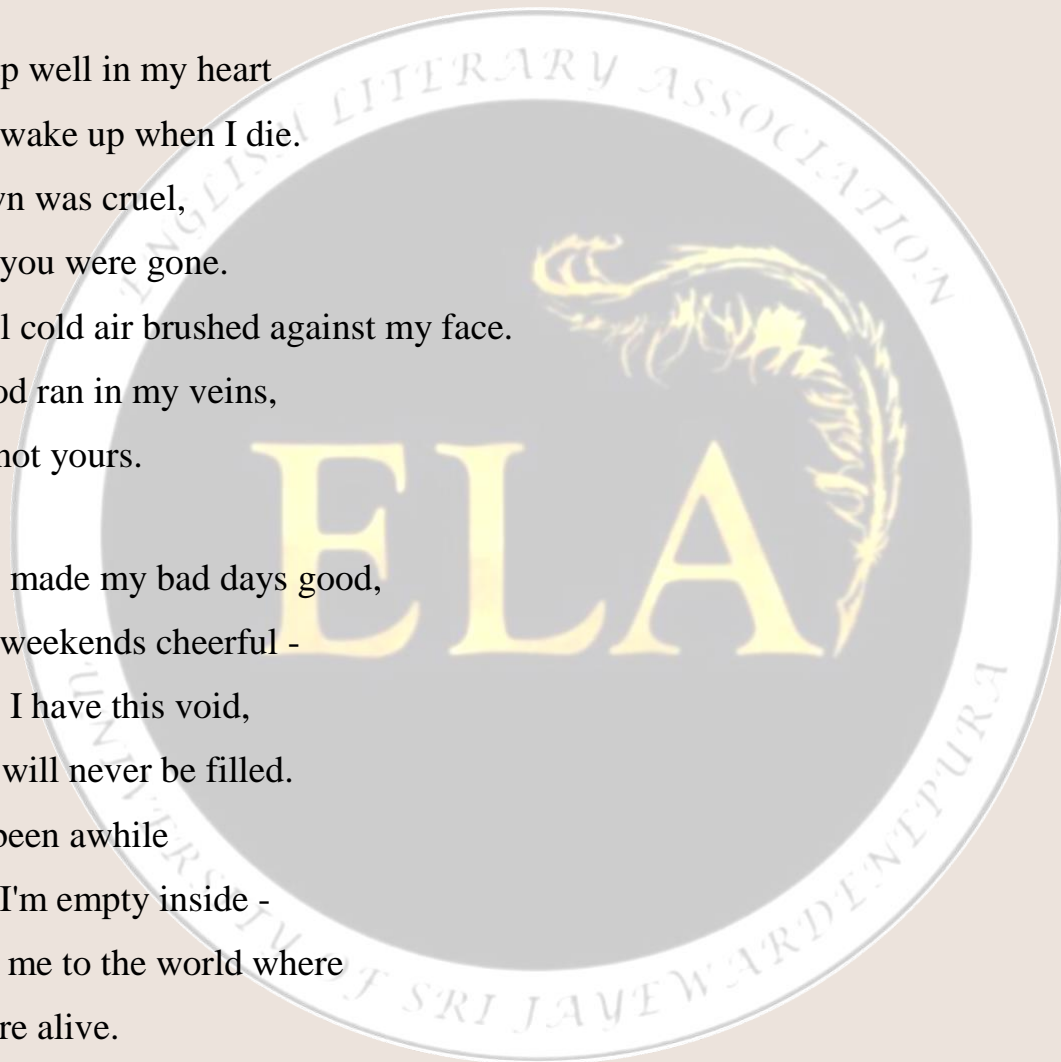
You made my bad days good,  
and weekends cheerful -  
now I have this void,  
that will never be filled.

It's been awhile  
and I'm empty inside -  
take me to the world where  
you're alive.

You shared half of my life with me  
and now you're gone.

You're the reason for the tears that fall  
on my cheeks at night.

Nothing's the same since I last saw your face.



Sleep well in my heart  
and wake up when I die.

Thaksala Narthanee  
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## ESCAPING the blizzard

Just a small snowflake  
It's sharp and quite  
Soon it will melt away  
First, I thought, but little did I know  
YEARS, days, hours, minutes passed  
Stiff and harrowing, it grew fast  
Now a size of a blizzard  
Coming at me with its sharp blade-like tips  
Soon it will fade away  
Next, I thought,  
WEEKS, days, hours, minutes passed  
Tremendous and agonizing, it grew fast  
Full of repentances and uncertainties  
Now, luring me into its hostile judgements  
Trapping me by its strident whispers  
Distancing me from my loved ones  
Family and friends  
It arises and goes, but I'm stuck  
Far away in its raucous thoughts  
"How can I ESCAPE?" one day I asked  
"You can't" It replied

Only way to ESCAPE is  
To ESCAPE from your life.

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## Ghost Lover

There you are! lying beside me every night  
There am I, lying beside you every night.  
Pleasures are in our favorite form tonite  
Night, my favorite, for the day is murderously bright  
Ghost is a wish, a memory, a thought  
Creating you in me, were a battle I fought  
And there you are, in perfect shape and form  
Lying beside me, intangible but warm  
There in my mind very little did I know  
My fancy and effort, every hammer and blow  
Were they in vain? or did I forget  
to forge your attention, my intangible asset?  
I toss and I turn, and I turn and I toss  
You grab my place, to be my boss  
No! I am almighty boss, thy creator  
I force my mind to subdue- the ghost creator.  
If that's what it means, "Imaginations run wild"  
I close my eyes, to let them run wild  
To let them wander about the unrhymed lands,  
I hope we land someday, on the same land.  
Dear ghost! or dear me! 4 in the morning,  
I wish you by my side. I start mourning,  
Morning! You are dead, for you are a ghost.  
There's nothing, no wish no ghost.

My fantasies thus kill me.

Before the day kills you, do kiss and leave me.

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# I am Pluto, You are Solar

From your circle, I am casted away  
Recently, for being too far away  
I still see you in your shining array  
I still feel you from a distant, dismay.

Embraced in the warmth, I hover  
Tossing and turning in the darkest corner  
Expecting a look, a little warmer  
Look here! I am Pluto, the little loner!

O how proud and prejudiced you stay  
O the blame, the words, you say  
The reason, is it me? Or the faulty array?  
Look! Around you, I revolve away.

The twinkling stars do witness  
Myself mumbling in bitterness  
Solar, self-centered with brightness  
Pluto, cornered, hovers lifeless.

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# Redemption

Artemis, Goddess of the Hunt, hear my plea.

My body is now a canvas painted with scars and injuries.

My soul has been captured and the scattered debris of my will remain.

Whilst a blazing fire rages from within, deeply scorching each vein.

Every breath is a shard of glass. I bleed when I breathe Artemis, a man has broken me.

The ocean has found solace in my eyes.

For I can't recall a moment when they were completely dry.

No substance can cleanse this imprinted stain, for its depth knows no bounds.

Entombed in an endless abyss, unable to stay afloat or drown.

I silently endure each labor predestined and decreed.

Artemis, a man has violated me.

A molded animated piece of flesh now roams the earth.

Scouring every corner and space, for some sign of self-worth.

I am an encased nightmare, trapped in a hell loop, advancing towards my final destination.

A secure haven. A serene abode. Where none view me as an abomination.

Staggering helplessly, I stumble forth towards my destiny.

Artemis, please.... please ... forgive.... Me

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## when people say it is

wrong to chose

the rainbow

that came after

the rain-

that came first,

it is never about what came first

or what came next.

it is only when the rainbow comes,

that you see the flaws in the rain.

so, it is all about

choosing,

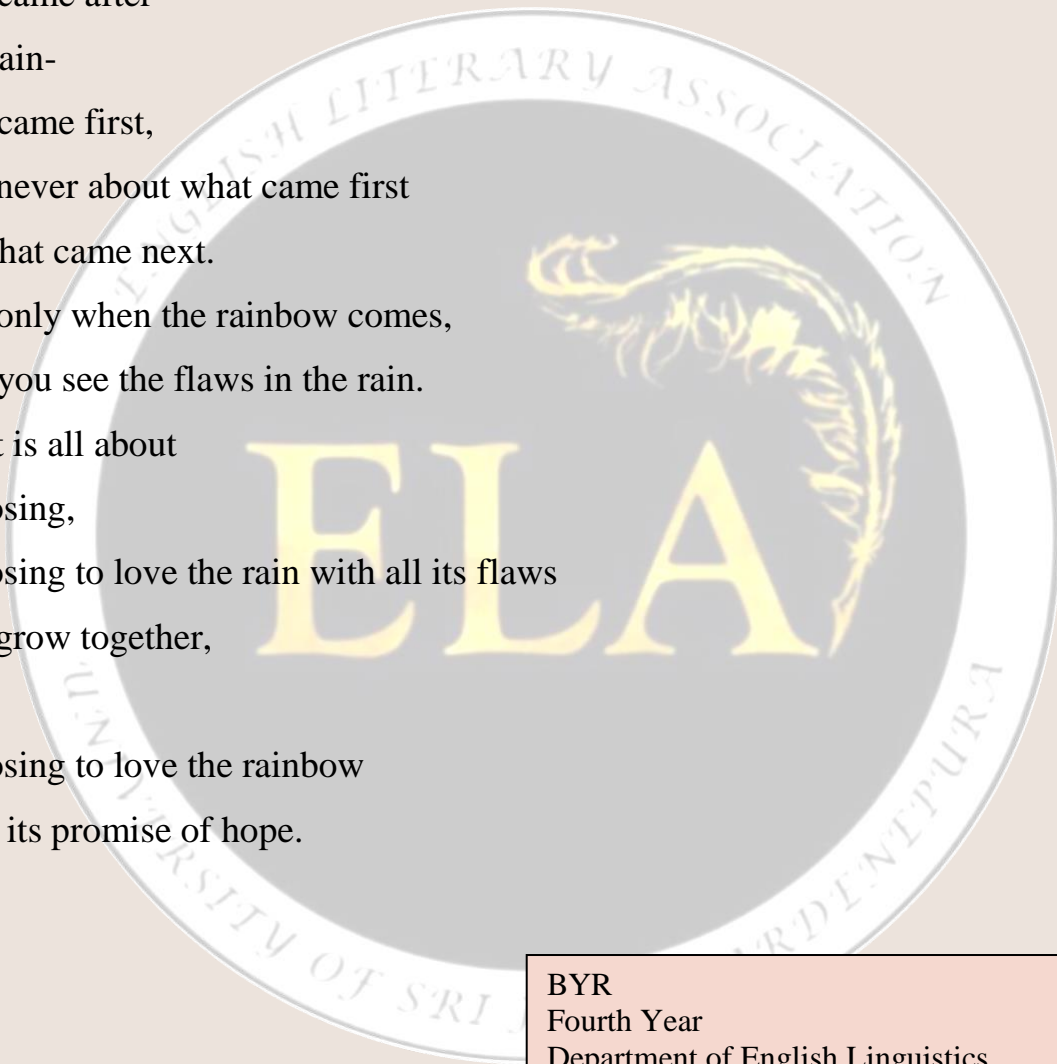
choosing to love the rain with all its flaws

and grow together,

or

choosing to love the rainbow

with its promise of hope.



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# The Teacher

When the sleep bothers further  
The head seeks a space to lean on .  
Rooftops beaten by the hottest sun  
Increase the perspiration.  
The so called 'sore throat'  
renounces the warning,  
'You need water!'  
Speeded-up heartbeat  
reminds me of the waiting for my own blood.  
But, the golden heart  
that stuck inside the figure,  
still bears up all hindrances  
just with the motive  
to lighten the lives of little ones.

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## The Ramblings of a Madman

11.33 pm

An abyss of darkness. Tinted windows. The soft whirring sound of the fans. The shuffling sound of the matron's shoes stomping across each aisle, as she completed her final round of checking up, on each patient. Satisfied, she sweeps out of the door, and immediately the lights go off. The cranking of a chain breaks through the silent atmosphere, as a padlock is slipped into place.

As if on cue, silence fills the empty dark abyss once more.

12.01 am

After what seemed like an eternity of trying, Adrian threw back his covers and propped up his pillow. Laying back he let his eyes wander, scanning the numerous immobile unconscious inmates lying in the ward. He often wondered what it felt like to effortlessly fall asleep without the endless cycle of thoughts taking over, on a daily basis. The experts had attributed it as one of the numerous symptoms of his condition. But then.

“Trouble sleeping?”

Adrian instinctively whipped his head around to find a tall dark man leaning against his bedpost. He was unusually well dressed for a visitor in the ‘Institute of Blown Up Minds’. His black Gucci suit, with dazzling silver cufflinks, seemed to brighten up his outfit. His shoes were well-polished, and an aura of unquestionable authority seemed to radiate from him. Despite the visitor's refined distinguished demeanor, Adrian couldn't help but feel a slight chill, coursing through his body. It took an immense energy and effort to suppress the urge to quiver like a helpless child. He involuntarily rubbed his arms in an attempt to thwart the sudden surge of gooseflesh that was threatening to break across his skin.

The well-dressed visitor was now making his way across the aisle towards the bed next to Adrian's. A fat man in his mid-fifties lay sprawled on the bed. His arms were dangling on either side of the bed frame, searing the image of a

rather pathetic crucifixion in the minds of those who had the misfortune to glance. To Adrian's utmost horror, the visitor proceeded to use the man's bulging stomach as a seat.

"What are you doing? Are you trying to wake him up?" hissed Adrian.

His mind was now swirling with all the endless scenarios which all happened to end disastrously, and were further stimulated by the sheer underrated fear of discovery.

"Ha-ha! Protective now are we" chuckled the visitor.

He then proceeded to tease Adrian but immediately ceased, upon seeing the distress scrawled on Adrian's face which had now paled in response.

"My dear boy, you do know that you happen to be the only one who can see me right?"

He had now taken a small metal flask out of his coat pocket, and took a long swig from its contents. Smirking, he held out the flask towards the pale huddled figure, who had now drawn the bedsheet around him like a cape.

"Why is it that I am the only one who can see you? What's so special about me?" mumbled Adrian completely ignoring the outstretched hand in front of him.

The visitor snorted and slowly withdrew his hand. After chugging down a few more sips he spoke.

"Well, why don't you tell me, Adrian. Or better yet, tell me what do the so-called 'All-Knowing Experts' have to say?"

The visitor lay back and looked at him expectantly.

Adrian glared at the visitor who was now using the man's open drooling mouth as a self-furnished foot-rest. He sighed and rolled his eyes.

"Shouldn't you be knowing that since you are supposedly all-knowing and all-powerful!" snapped Adrian tired of all the mind games, and the reverse psychology. Yet, after a slight pause he grudgingly answered.

"They said that I was mad. Schizophrenic. That's what they call..." he stopped abruptly as the visitor had burst into a massive uncontrollable fit of laughter. The visitor seemed clearly oblivious to Adrian's deathly dark stares.

"I always found the collective creativity of mortals to be the most underrated form of entertainment" sniggered the visitor who had now decided to occupy the edge of Adrian's bed.

“Only mortals would come up with the most bizarre terms as an attempt to classify anything that is beyond their understanding. Ironically, it happens to be one of the most common, yet unrecognized forms of madness.”

Adrian shook his head. ‘This is all wrong....’ He muttered. ‘You are not supposed to even be here.... I...I... shouldn’t even be seeing you, much less engaging in a conversation with you.’

A small forlorn smile lit up at the corners of the visitor's face. He sighed.

“Humans tend to label everything they come across ranging from connections to mere biological functions. It is a pathetic and futile attempt to create a sense of reassurance. An illusionary sense of control. They say every individual is unique, but are unwilling to accept unrecognized forms of uniqueness. Ergo, the use of their preferred umbrella term - ‘mad’.”

The visitor paused and glanced at Adrian who was now wearing a look of deep meditation. He badly wanted to believe the visitor whom he barely knew. Unexpectedly, Adrian found himself at a complete loss for words. As he struggled to rationalize his thoughts, he realized that the weight of the visitor’s words, as coherent as it seemed, contained extremely complicated concepts that were currently indigestible. He could not remember the last thing the visitor said or the point at which he’d finally fallen into a deep and dreamless slumber.

09.59 am

The metal clanging sound of the gong in the morning was still ringing in Adrian’s ears, as he stumbled his way towards the dining room, along with the other inmates. The smell of onion soup and toast wafted through the dining hall, finding its way up Adrian’s nostrils. The dining room reverberated with noise and confusion, as the inmates dashed forth to claim their seats. A few tables to Adrian’s right, three inmates were engaged in an intense brawl. Adrian rolled his eyes and started serving a small bowl of hot soup with four pieces of toast. Today, feeling rather ravenous for some unknown reason, he swiftly occupied a desolate chair at the corner.

10.37 am

He had massacred two pieces of toast and was on the verge of clawing the third when a voice behind him whispered

“Mind saving me the last piece?”

Adrian choked and a large chunk of chewed toast shot out of his mouth like a Frisbee. A ripple of laughter erupted immediately, spreading across the entire row at the dining table. Each one pointed at Adrian and laughed hysterically. Adrian turned a deep shade of red. Sweat had gathered on the insides of his palms. His fingers shook, as he hurriedly pushed his plate away and walked out of the room.

11.09 am

Halfway down the corridor to his ward Adrian paused to catch his breath, which came out in ragged gasps. Raging with embarrassment, despite knowing that the others couldn't help reacting the way they did. However, this knowledge provided him with exceptionally less comfort. Sighing, Adrian turned to go into the ward where he found his path blocked by a stranger.

Unlike the previous well-dressed visitor, the stranger happened to be decked in long bright white pants, accompanied with shiny polished white covered shoes. The sleeves of his bright white shirt were long and spotless. A gleaming black leather belt bound across his waist, enriched with a silvery metallic buckle in the shape of a vaguely familiar crest. He was leaning with his hands crossed, against the door frame leading to the ward, like a boulder obstructing the entrance of a cave.

“Do I know you?” grumbled Adrian, who still hadn't recovered from his breakfast fiasco which had occurred purely because of this stranger's creepy act of whispering in the first place.

“I am the Great Omnipresent Divine” he chuckled.

“Great! He speaks Adjective” muttered Adrian. Definitely a new inmate at the institute.

The Ramblings of a Madman

Frustrated, Adrian shoved the stranger aside, but curiously enough, he wouldn't budge. Startled, he tried again. And again. And again. The stranger just stood there calm and composed which only infuriated Adrian further, and gave him incentive to punish the stranger. The attempt was futile, as it was like continuously ramming oneself into a brick wall. Finally, he gave up and stroked his arms which had already started to throb.

"Interesting".

The stranger tittered as he watched an infuriated Adrian nurse his throbbing arm. Ignoring Adrian's lack of acknowledgement, he continued.

"Using one emotion to suppress or conceal another. And they say that mortals are mindless creatures."

The stranger approached Adrian who cowered and appeared clearly disoriented as well as in obvious pain. He attempted to sneak past the stranger, but found that his legs refused to obey him. He slumped down against the wall in defeat.

"So Adrian, why don't you tell me what's bothering you?"

His voice radiated concern and kindness, that Adrian found himself unconsciously lowering his guard. His anger dissipated. Oddly he found himself longing to confide in this stranger. There was a sedative yet authoritative aura emitting from him, in contrast to the icy chill he experienced when the previous well-dressed visitor had approached him.

"Everything" whispered Adrian. His voice quivered as he blurted out these words.

"Every moment that passes is a constant reminder of the imprisonment that I am forced to undergo. I am trapped in this institution because they think I am mad. I am trapped in this body of flesh and bones that deteriorates little by little, on a daily basis. Each time, I try to tell people what goes on in my mind, they all have this pitiful look in their eyes, and throw all their fancy medical terms at me.... I.... I just.... and Adrian found himself unable to continue the sentence. Tears started streaming down Adrian's face, and he furiously rubbed them away, almost clawing his eyes out. After a few minutes, Adrian proceeded with his confession.

"Maybe they are right after all. I am mad. I don't even know why I am even talking to you, or why is it that I am the only one who can see you. If you are one of my delusions, why haven't I seen you before and please don't tell me it's

because I am special or that my madness is a gift, like the previous well-dressed gentleman. I want the truth. And I want it now!” snapped Adrian.

The stranger sighed, yet retained his authoritative demeanor.

“I gathered that you have previously spoken to my wayward son already. He was always an intelligent one, and had a very interesting way of looking at things, in spite of being the Prince of Hell.”

A look of longing and nostalgia crossed over the stranger’s face. For a moment, Adrian forgot his misplaced anger and tear-stained face. He suddenly felt compelled to offer some words of comfort. However, he managed to resist the temptation, and resorted to nodding his head instead.

“Communication. A vital yet consistently misunderstood aspect of humanity. Humans tend to speak a lot. They go to great lengths to ensure the continuation of communication and even go on to develop various means of enhancing it as well. Unfortunately, in spite of the abundant availability of communicative modes, humans still lack the fundamental skill of communicating. This lack of communication in an era dominated by technology and other various modes pertaining to communication, is what should be regarded as madness. The fact that one cannot express themselves and be understood in spite of all the forums of communications available is nothing short of utter madness.” The stranger finished and gazed expectantly at his companion.

12.13 pm

Adrian was silent, as he pondered over the words of the stranger. Though it all seemed to make sense, something was not quite right.

“Are you saying that my madness is just because I can’t communicate? That it is only the fault of those who are unwilling to comprehend my visions?” croaked Adrian.

The stranger smiled forlornly and nodded.

“Yes. Miscommunication is rampant all over the world. Even between the realms as you might have heard. They call me the Almighty. The all-knowing supreme force, and various other names and titles as you know. God. The Holy Father. The list is not exhaustive, and hence I must admit that it is quite hard to keep track of them all I’m afraid. The nature of my form, my bidding, my work is often subjected to great debate. Your ideas are quite revolutionary Adrian. It is why I have finally visited. To show you that you are on the correct path, no matter what the medics have to say about it.”



Pausing to take it all in, Adrian mentally prepared himself. Now was his moment. He had to choose his words very carefully in order for it to display the intended effect.

“So you are saying that you are actually God. As in the Creator itself. And you do admit that you have often been a victim of miscommunication as well”, finished Adrian, pausing to see how the stranger would respond.

“Adrian my son, not only have I been a victim but I have also been used as a reason to fuel the raging fire of miscommunication. Wars have been fought in my name. Murder and other heinous crimes have been committed under my name. In fact, institutions have been built to preserve my name, which mortals use to instill fear and control. I have been both victim and victimized on numerous occasions for centuries.”

After intently listening to each and every word, having not yet received a reaction from the stranger, Adrian braced himself for the final question. The often unresolved million-dollar question.

“If you detest being victimized due to miscommunication, why do you allow it to happen in the first place?”

The stranger’s eyes sparkled. But before he could reply, Adrian quickly pressed on.

“If all these atrocities were committed in your name, why did you not intervene and stop them? Instead you let them carry on for eons allowing history to repeat itself. You say that you have been a victim of miscommunication. Yet, thousands of mortals pray, and invest a lot of faith and belief in you. Why do you not heed their pleas? Why don’t you ever listen when we try to reach out? It seems to be that you are not a victim but the reason why miscommunication prevails!”

The last few sentences rang out rattling the air like ricocheting bullets, which invariably attracted, and drew a number of onlookers towards Adrian. Adrian had turned a deep shade of red, and his whole body was quaking with the intensity of his rage. The stranger looked concerned, and attempted to pacify him.

“Adrian.....I....”

But Adrian never got to hear the rest of it, as he was busy wrestling with a woman in a blue uniform, who was hovering over him. In the right palm of her outstretched hand, which was pinned down by Adrian, was a syringe filled with an antipsychotic drug. Adrian’s eyes were bloodshot, his body shaking uncontrollably, as he thrust the nurse against the wall, startling all the other inmates. His ears seemed to have been clogged with rage as he could barely

hear the orders given by his victim. Suddenly, he felt himself being dragged away. His attempts to fight back proved to be in vain, as he was being tied up, and forcefully led away.

1.17 pm

Everything seemed to be moving fast, and rather blurry. He blinked his eyes but to no avail. All of a sudden, he felt himself being shoved onto a bed in an isolated room. The bed was hard and made out of cold metal, and its impact sent waves of pain coursing up Adrian's back. He tried to move, and realized that he had been strapped down. He struggled harder, and the room seemed to drift in and out of focus. He seemed to be able to only hear and feel, which made him panic. He could literally feel his heart beating in his chest as if trying to break free from the body it was imprisoned in.

“Clear!”

All at once two metallic black pads crackling with electricity, as if one was trying to tune in to a radio channel, were placed on Adrian's bare chest. Immediately, his whole body jerked as if a

spirit had suddenly entered his body. His body started twitching and convulsing until it suddenly sprang up again. Everything began to fade, and at last, his body lay immobile.

2.39 pm

When Adrian finally opened his eyes, he saw a tall lean figure looming above him. He blinked rapidly. It took several minutes for the fog surrounding his vision cleared. The figure was now grinning widely at him, dressed in black pants and a black shirt. A sliver band dangled at the end of his wrist, with two intersecting wings etched on it.

“It's you!” Adrian laughed as he gazed at the figure.

“Thank heavens! I was afraid that your fiasco would make it impossible for you to recognize your very own guardian angel”.

At these words, both of them broke into a fit of hysterical laughter.

“Shhhhhh...” he whispered, trying in vain to stop the incoming surge of laughter that was threatening to engulf him. “If they heard us laughing, they would surely try to sedate you, or administer some bizarre drug. Who knows what kind of tortures these doctors come up with on a daily basis”.

Adrian snorted and exploded into another fit of uncontrollable giggles making him breathless. As he struggled to regain his composure, he decided to confront the angel. Adrian was tired of all the lies and the manipulation. He didn't feel special. He certainly did not feel like he belonged at the institute either. He deserved to know the truth.

“Am I mad?” he asked directly.

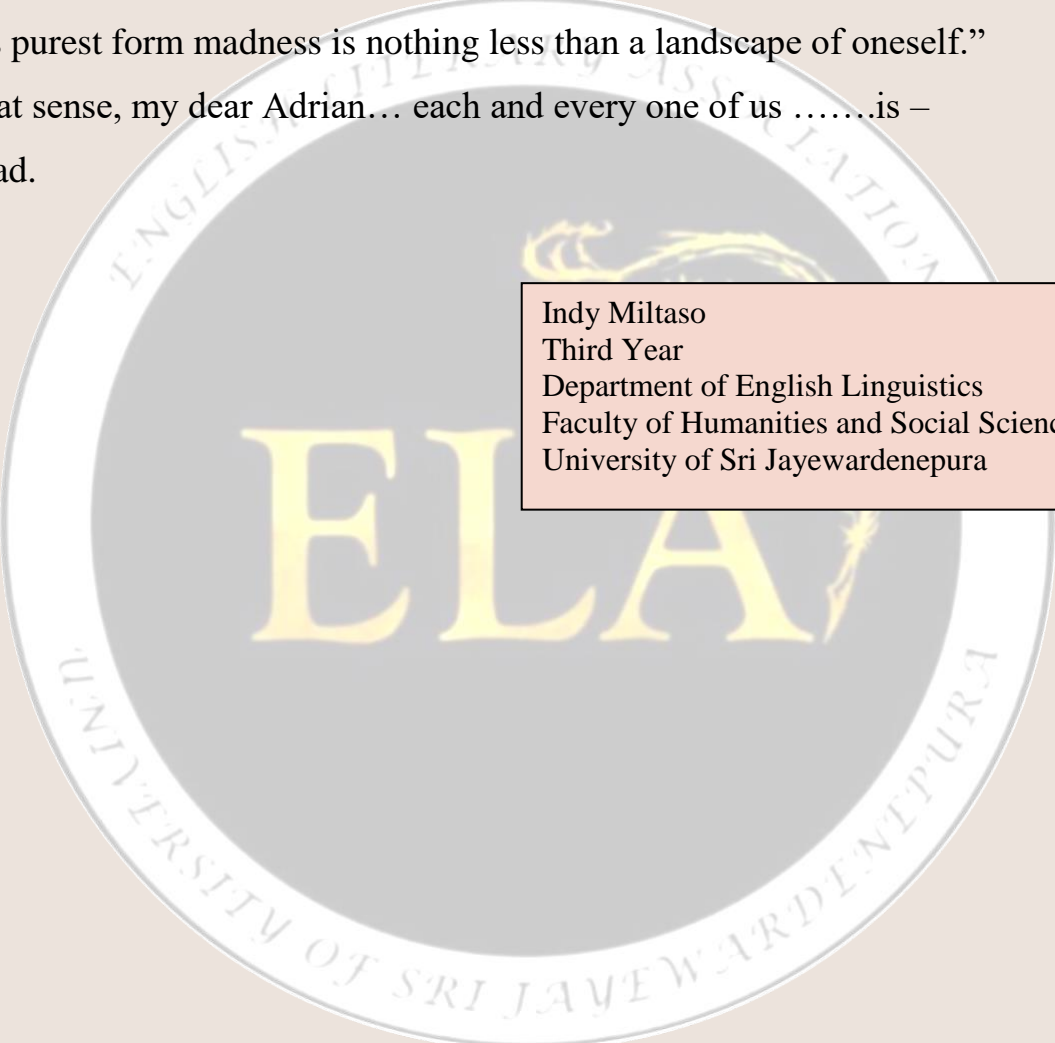
The guardian angel beamed.

“Madness is not a state of mind; neither is it conceptualized ideology.

In its purest form madness is nothing less than a landscape of oneself.”

In that sense, my dear Adrian... each and every one of us .....is –

---mad.



Indy Miltaso  
Third Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

# Mended Hearts

Hovering around in search of a cure,  
Ended up in a shop.

“I sell mended hearts”, the shopkeeper said.

”I could trade one for another“, he said.

So I gave the heart which broke mine.

“This heart will take time to heal...”

I wonder why you fell for him

He is still wandering around

Unable to comprehend himself.

(“)Your heart was meant to be broken by him, as he had thorns outside his  
broken heart and they were meant to prick you.”

I sighed.

In Exchange, he offered me a mended one...fragile I must say, but I took it.

A mended one,

With cured wounds

Blessings from the upper hand

And I gave the new heart

A chance

And now I know I am healing

Slow and steady

Tani Thilakaratne  
Fourth Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

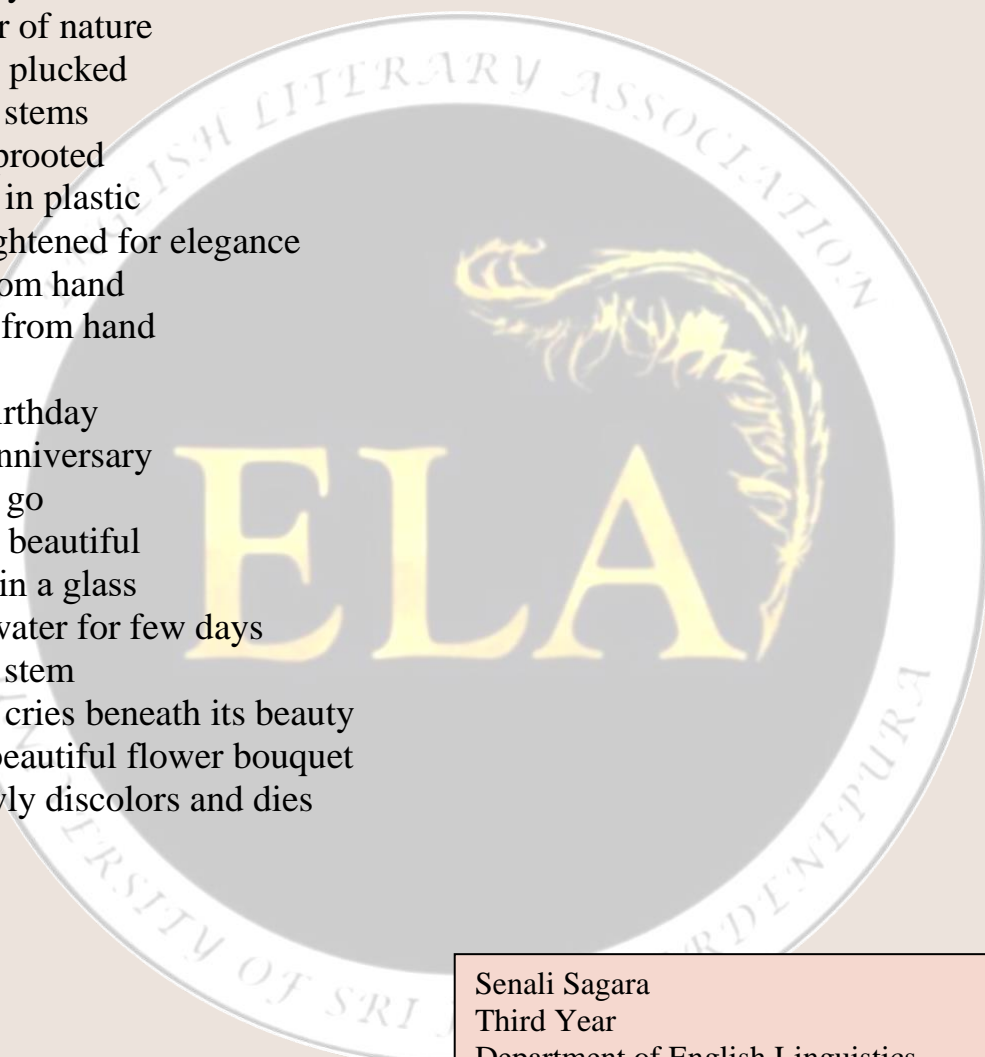
## How many more?

Beneath our skin lies a creation:  
Carefully painted in majestic colours,  
In it you will find colours  
that soothes your eyes with its intricacy.  
Choose a favourite? I say .  
So mesmerized you are,  
smitten by the beautiful colours,  
that you deny an answer.  
Why? I ask  
"Picking one favourite will do no justice to this creation.  
For all the colours woven together,  
give it its elegance and serenity."  
Is your classic reply.  
After all, aren't we all the same underneath all that skin?  
How many more do we have to lose,  
all for the sake of different skin and faith?  
Just tell me, how many more?

Aqilah Naleem  
Fourth Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
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# Flower bouquet

It blossoms  
The beauty of nature  
The decor of nature  
Suddenly plucked  
Cut from stems  
Wildly uprooted  
Wrapped in plastic  
A bow tightened for elegance  
Passed from hand  
To hand, from hand  
To hand  
Happy Birthday  
Happy Anniversary  
Here you go  
You look beautiful  
Now it's in a glass  
A bit of water for few days  
Cut from stem  
Painfully cries beneath its beauty  
It was a beautiful flower bouquet  
That slowly discolors and dies



Senali Sagara  
Third Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
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## Bleeding with societal disgust

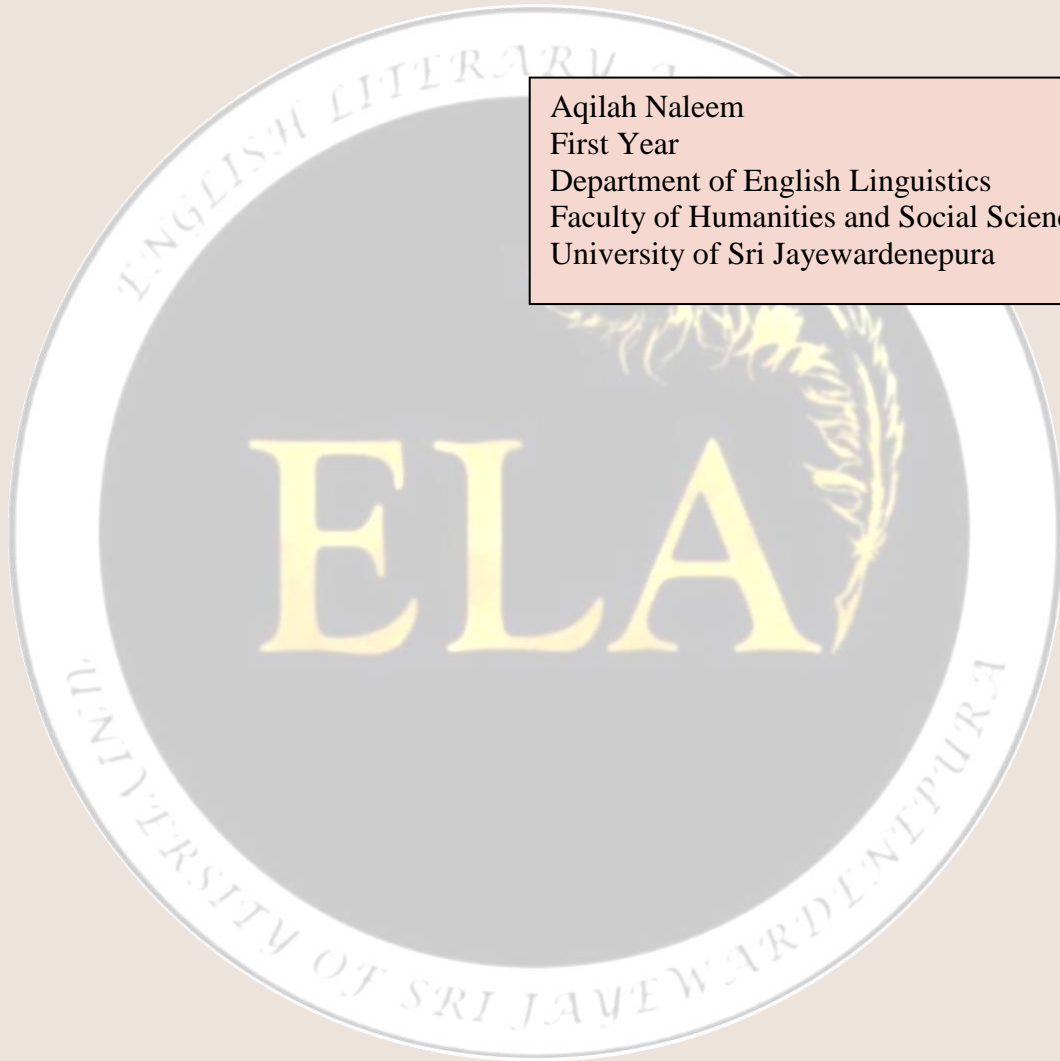
There comes that time once a month,  
A flow of blood to cleanse her body.  
That's when the devil knocks on her door  
"Stay away!" , "Don't have a bath",  
"Don't cut your nails"  
The never-ending list of the do's and don'ts  
She has to follow like a society trained robot  
Just..just because she menstruates!

You once approved her menstruation,  
Celebrating it lavishly,  
Yet now, you look at her with disgust!  
You want her to stay hygienic and clean,  
While you don't bother educating her on menstrual hygiene...

I wonder what changed the smiles that were once joyous over the news of her  
bleeding?  
You now treat her like a thorn in a rose bush.

The blood that our ancestral women...  
The blood that women worldwide...  
The blood that society is disgusted...  
Yes, the blood we women bleed  
Is called menstruation!

I won't crumble upon society's taunts,  
I will bleed despite society's disgust,  
I will not let shame creep in,  
I will remain strong and hygienic  
And I hope you do too!



Aqilah Naleem  
First Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura



## Sweet Lord

Dear lord, disguised in darkest robes,  
Won't you visit me tonight?  
An unknown pain sparks in my heart,  
I'm blind like a man drunk in desire, touching and  
Feeling in the blackest of nights, unable to find myself.  
Dear lord, won't you take me into your arms?  
And wrap me carefully in your silk folds?  
A haze takes over my already delusional mind,  
I fall more deeply into a pit of sharp thorns,  
As reality flickers out.  
Dear, lord won't you tell me sweet nothings tonight?  
To soothe this scorching pain blazing within me  
Won't you give me sweet, forever silence  
today?  
I suffered enough, dear lord, I've gained my pains.  
A sinner to him, a stigma in others' eyes.  
Dear lord, won't you end me today?  
Unless you kill me, I won't be free from this binding  
So take the dagger, don't be afraid my lord  
And stab me deep in the heart,

The very heart you killed ages ago.

My sweet lord.

Nyra  
First Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura



## Solace

Tendrils of peace invaded her senses, Washing away the agony that lingered in her bones. Shackles that tore her soul fell apart, And the girl tasted her freedom in delight. She casted her eyes to the heavens above, Sighing out nimbly to the grand order of life. Hoped for the skies to sigh back at her, And wanted to paint the black canvas in her soul with constellations and its soft colours. Hurt she was, yet she didn't want to remain alive within it. Smiled at the misty dawn the sun prince charioted, Bid farewell to the gentle moon lady and her starry face. She closed her eyes in peace, Coaxing an aching mind to cease.

Nyra  
First Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

## Eclipse to the Ceylon University

At last, a consoling call at 11 pm. After Jessie's farewell celebration. I didn't muse it was mine too.

We've just got into the van. I was overwhelmed!

I was lucky to express my ecstatic feeling to her. Fazmi you were a sweet soul who helped me all the time and appreciated my companionship. Your warmth hugging in every achievement was a blessing. I believe you are looking at me being a tiny star glittering in the dark sky. When we walked together to the World Trade Center we used to share our precious moments and expectations. Because she was a strong pillar supporting me in every amusement and heartbreak.

One day she asked me; "Sam, What brings you here?"

"My expectations" I replied.

"I am failing to show you a huge mountain covered with greenery in this craggy city Fazmi but look at the Twin towers we are stepping now. It was the same day I came for the interview that I recognized everything went to pot because of a decimal"

"Aiyo! Don't burst into tears. Remember you are an eclipse"

It was the day I shed that much tears. However they assisted me not to diminish my expectations. Particularly title-tattle were my fears.

"Don't get despondent Sam, if teachers encouraged you not to worry; you probably know you will be blinded". I glanced at her tenderly.

I will always remember the days the way we shared our hopes, hardships and achievements. Most importantly the tight hugging you offered me didn't accumulate us to Sri Lankan political deviations. We together put such a gigantic trust in each other.

"You are the eclipse! You are that eclipse! Sam"

Tears of happiness flowed over her shoulders. I feel if I run back to the days we were together *akka*. Being the *nangy* to you I was very close to you. I am talking to you; to that beautiful angel watching me far away.

“Who asked you to rush into a long journey this soon?”

You told me, “Finally the driver’s little daughter is going to Ceylon University”. When honest feelings of her motivated me, hypocrisy of my own people motivated me to find my first most achievement.

“Why do you study?” when relatives asked me purposely and sarcastically. I replied with a smile but I cried inside. “*Campus Yannada?*” their utterances echoed in my mind. When I realized I have rekindled the world of my parents and siblings, there was excitement filled with millions of expectations. I was proud because I observed his happiness. I remember how he was wearing old shirts and trousers while working in the lorry, his sweats and hidden tears of seeing us growing day by day along with the challenges. I was delighted to see his innocent smiling face, proudly hugging me after hearing the achievement.

I remembered the day my sister replaced me with her chance of visiting Ceylon University for the first time. A day filled with a lot of blissful orientations visiting the sacred city. I determined this is to be my destination one day. I said to my friend “I wish I could come here”. I try to smile proudly as it’s been three years since I truly lived in that dream.

What a day it was! It was the day I became a student in this huge space of green. I felt I was sustained by the gigantic trees around me as I trusted them as Fazmi. They never scripted my stories everywhere. I felt their warm hug each morning walking to the university premise. I met different people and cultures. I perceived beautiful and bitter experiences. Finally, I realized it’s not the ten fingers equal either. It was a different dream and an experience where you all must attempt to. The predominant thought most of us feel today is “If we could go back to the days at Ceylonese green space” But the time of monsters had stolen my secret holders secretly as you secretly said “Goodbye” to me Fazmi.

G.M Imesha Prasadini  
Fourth Year  
Department of English  
University of Kelaniya

# YOUTH

To Youth.

You are great,

That you can feel and experience,

What child and adult never can.

You are so special,

That child longs to become and

Adult to reminisce

Youth is -

Where anyone can experience,

Love, betrayal,

Sweet, sour,

Happy, sad,

Win and lose.

Everyone passes you.

You give them a lot of memories,

Which will never fade away.

You are strong,

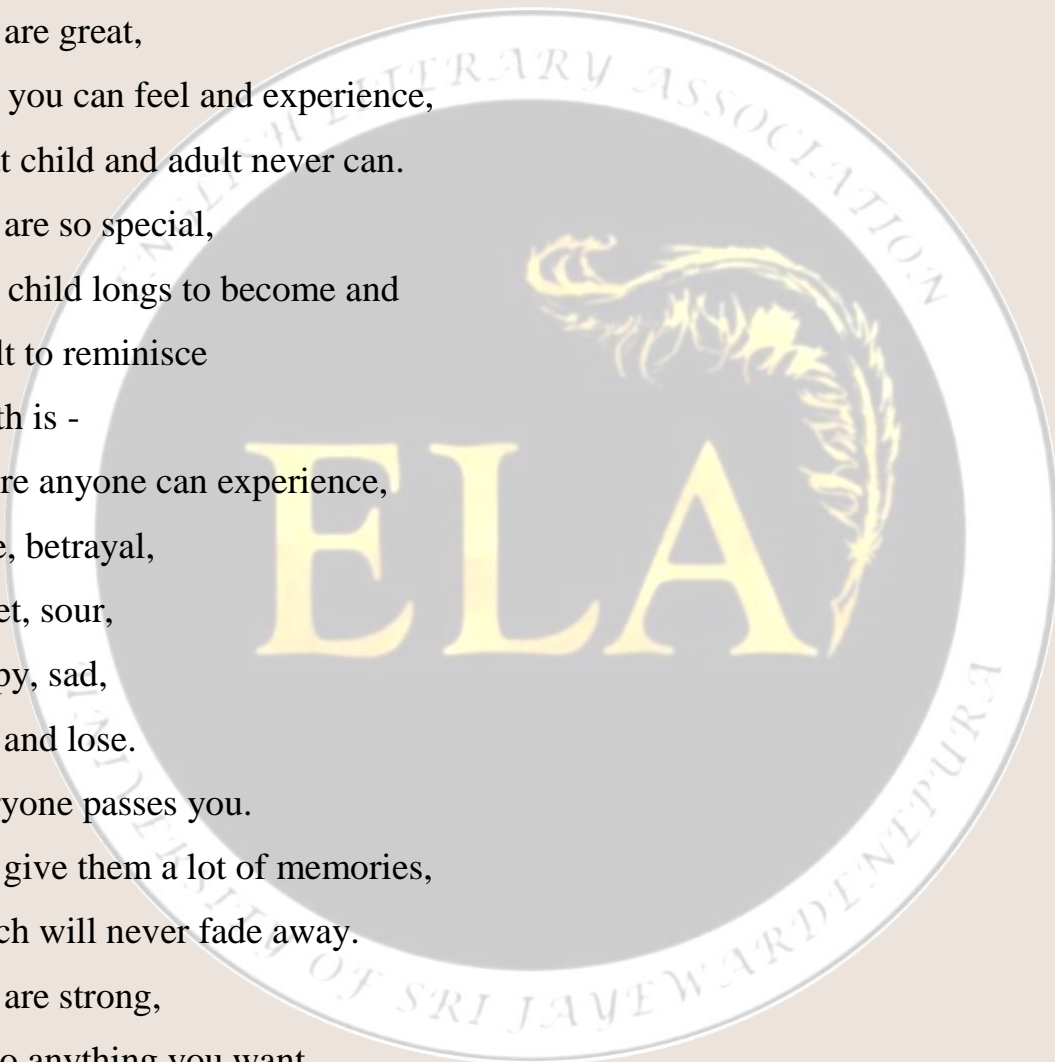
To do anything you want,

Which others cannot do.

Some choices of yours feel bitter,

But,

It will be the best in future.



You are a drug,

Which everyone is easily addicted to

Bimba Dimbulemulla  
First Year  
Department of Western Classical Culture  
University of Kelaniya



# Ray of Hope in an Epoch of Despair

Forlorn devastated me  
Composed soothing thee  
Splashing the essence of benevolence  
Evading the scary echoes of turbulence  
Caressing the anguish of despair  
Taking me into your nurturing care  
Murmuring the hums of an angelic gaiety  
Attempting to capitulate shades of futility  
Found a solace in your warmth  
Found I lost life in your warmth  
Blazing eyes with ceaseless zest  
Paving the yield for a blooming blest  
Pondering to find enough words  
To felicitate those unfeigned efforts  
Here, I am with teary sprinting eyes  
Not of despair, but of violet skies

Tharuvi Mihisara  
Second Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Kelaniya



## Galle Fort 24th July 2019

“Let’s make Galle our *Summer in Northern Italy*,” you said. It was late afternoon, and we’d managed to secure a corner seat on the balcony of a little gelato shop. We could see all the little shops in the street, buzzing with people despite it being a working day. I was trying to capture an ‘Instagram worthy’ photo of my copy of *Call Me By Your Name* and the gelatos we had bought a few minutes ago; strawberry cheesecake for me, and the most chocolaty one they had for you. The gelatos were melting away, but you didn’t seem to mind. It was a good day, a very good day.

It’s amazing how you meet certain people in life and feel right at home. We were both molded by past heartaches and were burdened with emotional baggage, but that’s how I felt when I ran into you a year ago as if by a chance encounter.

For the longest time, I had been wandering around aimlessly without any sense of belonging. I was so used to the fort of solitude that I had built around myself where I didn’t want the warmth of another human being jeopardizing my space. Perhaps, all of this is to say that I was afraid to be human. For being human is to love, and allow yourself to be tainted by love in return. I was lousy at this very basic function of a human being so I was afraid of being found out.

That is until I met you.

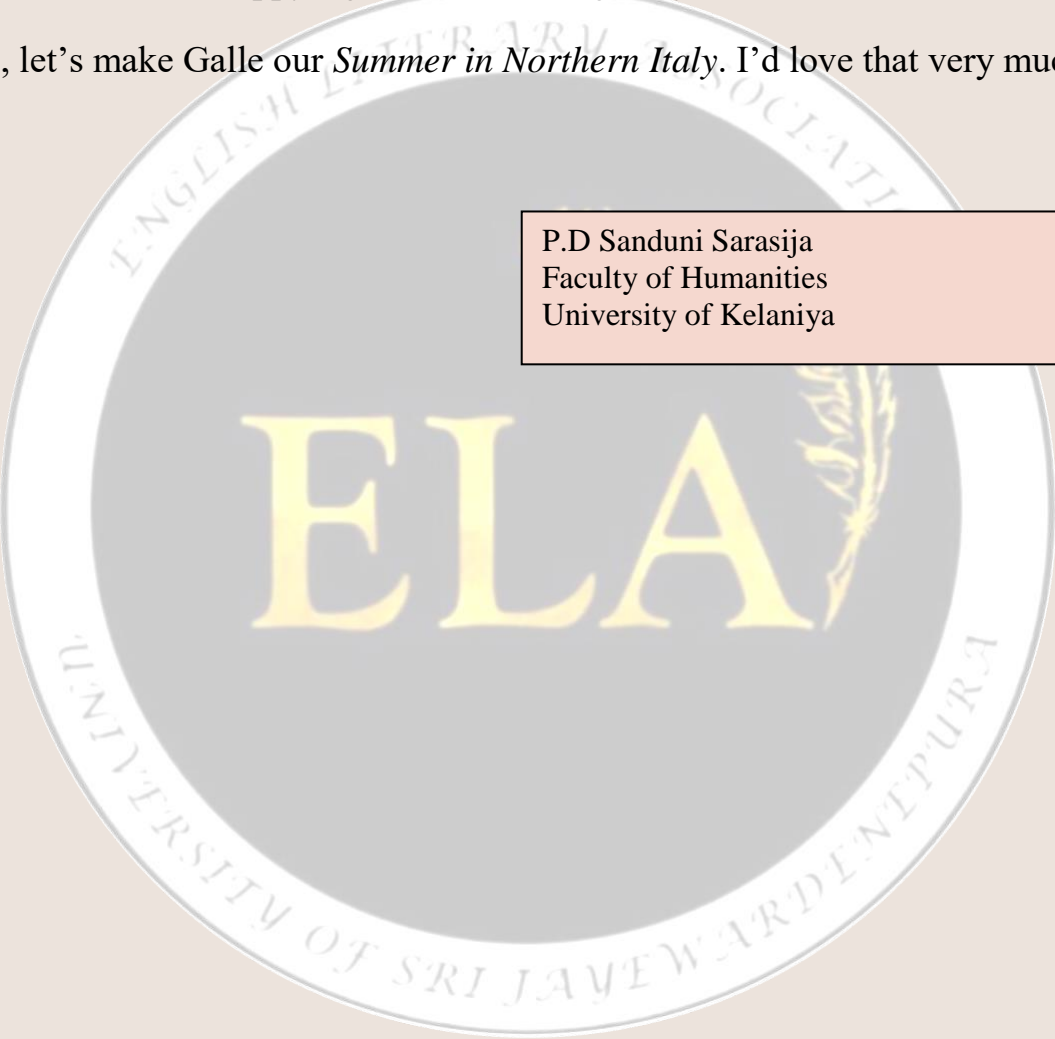
It was like going on a hike in the middle of nowhere and accidentally stepping into a patch of wild sunflowers that spread yards and yards across an abandoned field. Unbeknownst to many - but standing bright and tall. That’s what it felt like when I met you for the first time. You were a territory alien to me, but I felt safe and at home. I thought the sudden brightness would hurt me; instead, it cocooned me in a warm embrace. For the first time, I realized what André Aciman meant when he wrote, “*but to feel nothing so as not to feel anything – what a waste!*” in *Call Me By Your Name*.

Maybe that’s why I loved the book so much. Despite having watched the movie first, doting over Timothée Chalamet, and falling in love with Sufjan Stevens’ music that makes you think of fragrant summer days, it was the book that drew me in. The words at times spoke to your soul the way poetry does and I loved

the overwhelming emotions they delivered. You, of course, knew this. Hence the remark, “let’s make Galle our *Summer in Northern Italy*.”

Staring at your eyes from across the table, these are the thoughts that cascaded down my mind until I was interrupted by the soft touch of your hand on mine. You looked at me with a hint of quizzical amusement and said, “ever the dreamer, you wandered off on your own again, didn’t you?” We both laughed. The sun was setting behind you over the Indian Ocean, casting gold and pink streams of dancing light all over the place. The sunset looked so beautiful on you, I let out a soft happy sigh while reaching for your hand.

“Yes, let’s make Galle our *Summer in Northern Italy*. I’d love that very much.”



P.D Sanduni Sarasija  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Kelaniya

## To the poet

You have the right-

The perfect time,

to fight-

INJUSTICE

INSECURITY

RACISM

Thousands of meaningless words

Millions of vague arguments

Billions of unanswered questions

Take your pen

Go to battle

Answer them all.

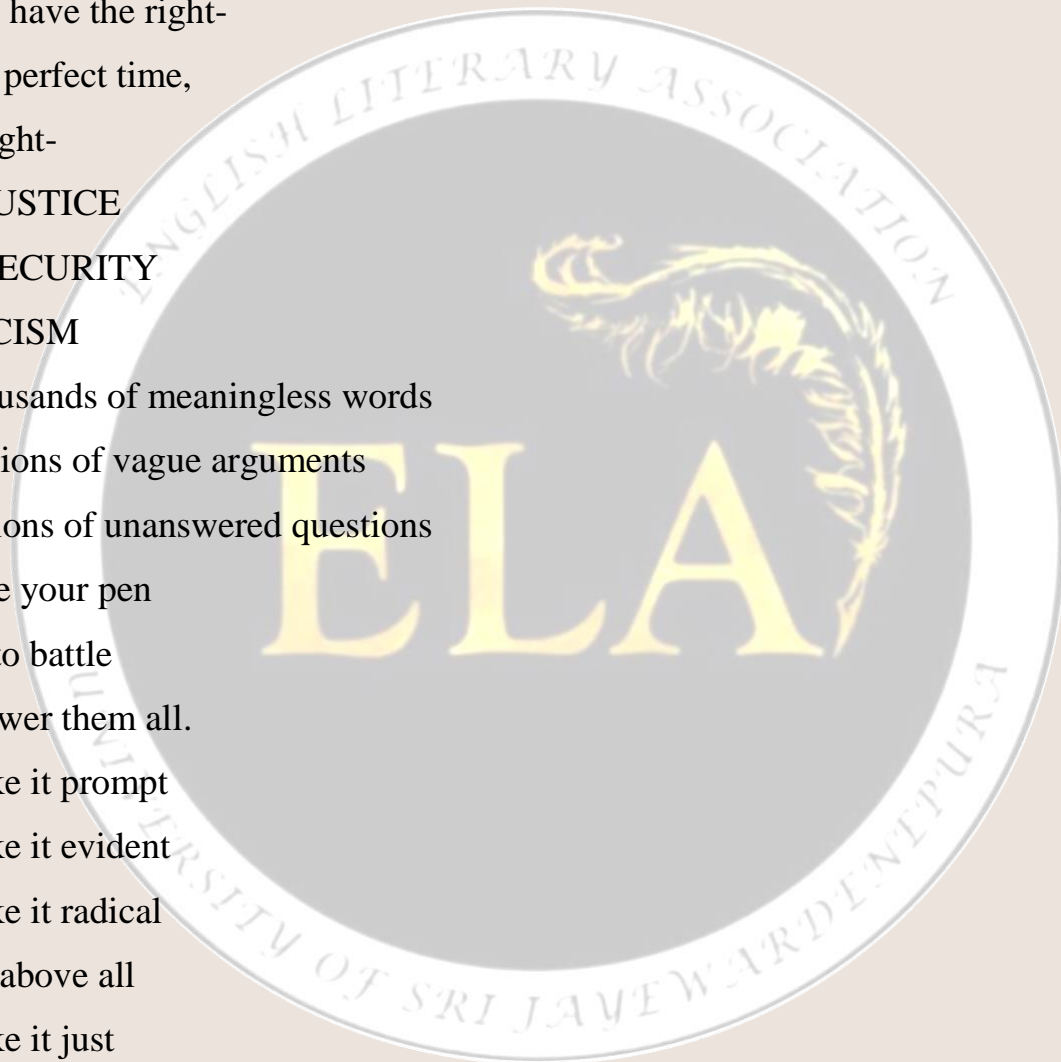
Make it prompt

Make it evident

Make it radical

and above all

Make it just



Limali Amalya  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Kelaniya

## Pieces of peace

The world is yours and mine.  
Every human being has the right to it.  
Humans have the right to live  
freely in his own home  
But as the world progresses,  
Humans' greed has unnecessarily used  
his power to divide the world.  
Humans fight to live freely.  
Humans have to struggle to breathe freely.  
Peace is an agreement limited to signatures.  
Peace is in the heart of humans.  
In thoughts, in words,  
Peace is the strength of humans.  
Humans must love humans.  
The world today is divided  
like a page in a box rule book.  
Together we are strong enough to erase that box rule.  
As long as humans are alive,  
peace will be alive.

M.T. Ridmi Ruwanmali Sirithunga  
Department of Information Technology  
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

## Father to Daughter

“University years, those were the days!  
Leaving home for the first time,  
Typical 'backpack' tied to the shoulders.  
Became a part and parcel of 'Room No.16',  
For four long years;  
Shared beds, shared clothes, shared canteen lunch,  
Late night, midnight feasts, in hostel rooms.”

“ *I* became *we*,  
*Me* became *us*,  
*Mine* became *ours*,  
With a family of life-long friends.”

“Books rolled,  
Her eyes met mine,  
Love at first sight,  
She became my soul mate.”

“Finally came  
The big day,  
The day of graduation.  
Secretly watched,  
The tear drops,  
Twinkling in my mother's eyes.”

"The best days... in all my 50 years,"  
Said my father, patting my head.  
I silently listened,  
Staring at the 'Zoom' screen,  
With tear-dimmed eyes.

Will there ever be such 'days of beauty' in my life?  
Oh! the online life!

Ama Shakya  
First Year  
Faculty of Medicine and Applied Sciences  
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka



## To word...

The gloomy breeze, cold and dark  
Howls of wind, echo in me  
Giant trees stirring in the gust  
An unknown time of the day

The rain blades hit the ground  
No voices, no chirps, no laughs  
Just the cries of loneliness  
Within the shades of rays  
Peek through my window

I crawl with a paper,  
With my aching heart  
My view is blurred  
The veins stagnated,  
The fragile pillars within me.  
To word the thoughts, the hardest ever  
Without knowing the end, I start.

My soul weeps,  
the reason unknown  
Trapped in a cage, I feel.

Aghast!  
A thunder!  
My pen slips-

Binuri Dissanayake  
Second Year  
Department of English Linguistics  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura







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