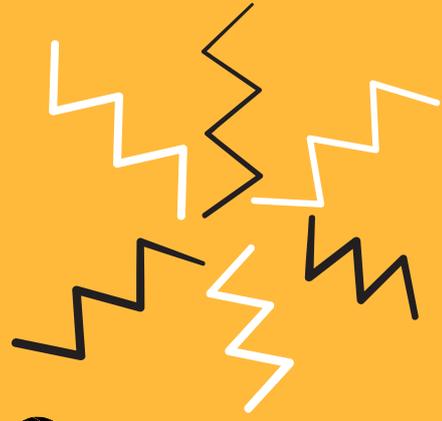


FEBRUARY 2019

Vol 01

The



Side
new



IRE FORTITER QUO NEMO ANTE IIT

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Editor's Note

The

he B-side was originally the collection on the reverse side of a vinyl record, backing the A-side. It comprised of songs that were not promoted or rarely broadcasted.

This magazine is a collection of anecdotes and stories that have not yet been tapped upon and hence, belong to the B-side.

India ranks as the 2nd largest nation that sends its students abroad. Furthermore, there is a huge global base of Indian academia. Yet if one turns the spotlight inward to look at the number of foreigners who come to India as students/professors, it isn't surprising why India is ranked far behind in global inclusion in the world.

The headliner, "Outlandish" is a compilation of views of foreign students and professors in IITD, wherein we try to gauge the factors that are alluring and those that are lacking in our institute.

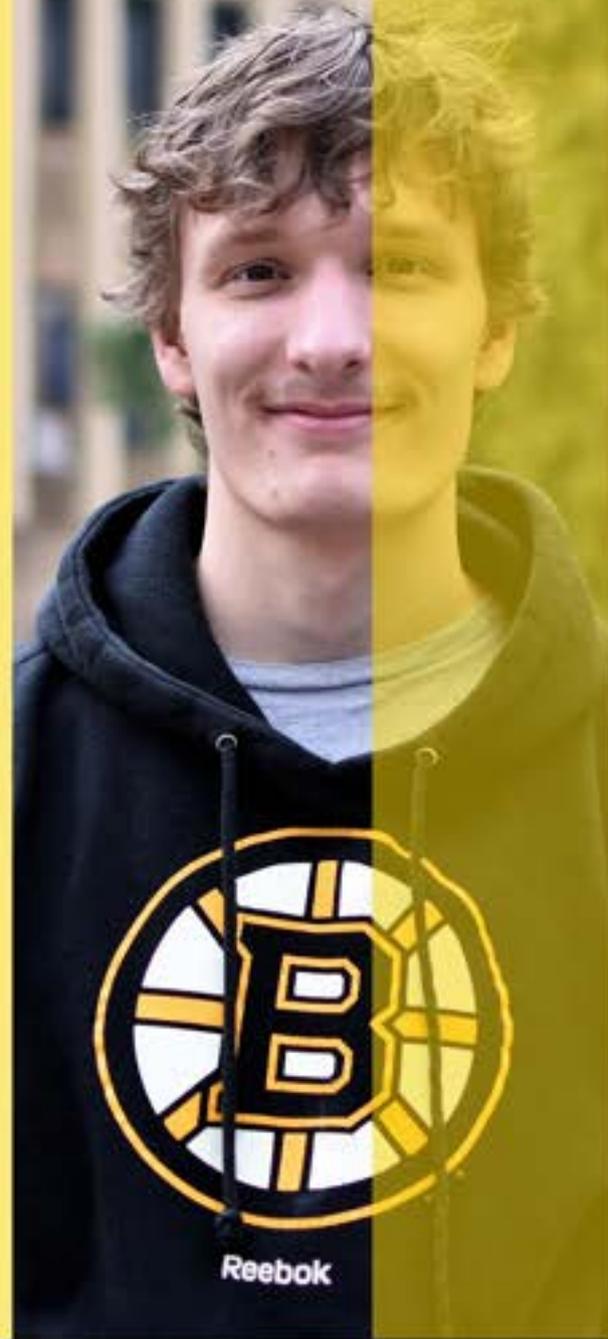
Weave, "The Imbroglia" is a metaphorical picture of the A-side/B-side, being applied to an individual's psychology. As Hamlet had said to Ophelia, "God has given you one face, and you make yourself another." The two entities that live inside one's mind are so contrasting that one's A-side would be vehemently opposing RSS irrationality, while the B-side screams मंदिर वही बनायेगे.

The story traces the narrative of a young girl battling depression, whose A-side, the side facing the world completely succumbs to her trials. Yet it's her own B-side that pushes her out of the cloud of uncertainty. The duality, and simultaneous struggle and balance of these two sides is what keeps her, and anyone, hanging in!

Lastly, the poem 'कौच का घर' is an account of a lesbian trying to sustain her fragile house of love in the boulevard of broken dreams. Despite facing scorn, ridicule and abandonment from society, she stands strong in her fight against the unreasonable ideology of opposition of a certain definition of love.

We hope that the different connotations of the B-side excite our readers just as much as popular opinion, and help broaden their horizon of comprehension.

See you on the flip side :)
Arundhati Dixit



O u t l a n d i s h



Quoting Professor Rao from the interactive session held in Dogra Hall on February 13, “International ranking takes into account the number of foreign students, foreign faculty and faculty student ratio. On all these three counts, IIT Delhi has been scoring a zero.”

With IITD being one of the best India has, we tried to probe into the system and spoke to foreign students and professors here about their experiences and insight.

Professor Adam Knowles

*Visiting Faculty
Department of Humanities
and Social Sciences*



"For a long, I have had a lot of personal links to India. I have been able to see large parts of India through my friends and colleagues. The higher education system here is very dynamic. With a lot of new universities coming up, it is a place for the future, open and bright in many ways. So, there is a lot of excitement among the youth that attracted me here.

India has been incredibly welcoming and open. There is a lot of hunger and desire to read the kind of things I work on, and it has been a rich and rewarding experience. There are a lot of differences in the universities of the USA and IIT, but I have realized that the students are same everywhere. It is wonderful to be around students and that is indeed what we like to do as professors.

Foreign faculty coming to India is increasing with time. I think it is a failure on our part that many people do not know the opportunities available and tend to be caught in the assumption that one either stays in North America or goes to Europe, or some place like Japan and Korea. It is important to realise that the kind of enriching conversations we have, don't just happen in North America or Europe, they can happen just anywhere."

"With heavy course load and tight schedule, most foreigners would have it easier in their home countries. Same goes for food and accommodation, which is good enough but unsatisfactory, giving more reasons to complain. For full time enrollment, the admission criteria is very restricted, mostly constructed for Indians. So people prefer to apply to universities with an easier procedure. Cultural differences are bound to be there, but in my experience, the student community responsible for interaction with foreign students is also pretty weak, so adjusting becomes harder.

The functioning of sports and recreational student societies is smoother. I tried joining some clubs, but due to language barrier and lack of peer group, haven't been able to do so.

My conversation with Prof. Rao was very good, since I was able to highlight the difficulties I faced first hand, and he has been working on the feedback we gave, so positive changes in administration are expected. In general, Indian students going abroad aspire to study well in better research facilities, whereas the visiting students here want to travel around the country more. A change of that image and positive reviews of visiting students would be instrumental in solving the problem."



Jaen Hyun Kim

*Sophomore
Biotechnology and
Biochemical Engineering*

Hendrik Kapmeyer

Foreign exchange student, UG
Mechanical Engineering



"Universities of most exchange students have partnerships with IIT and that is how we connect. India, in Germany, is better known as a place to travel than to study. That is the general reason why people come here. In technical standards, Germany is very high. With education being free, it is quite attractive to stay there.

I have been here now since December and I am still not registered for all the courses. I keep going to UG Section, and they keep deferring. Coming from Europe where everything is organized, it isn't easy to adjust here. Besides, language is often difficult. English with an Indian accent is very hard to understand. Teachers often switch to Hindi while answering questions.

I am still getting to know India. There is definitely an option of coming back for higher studies and research. But I would also like to explore other countries."

"IIT is quite famous, I can travel as well as do my research. So far, I have been to so many places in India which does not happen when I'm in France.

People don't know about the procedure to become a full-time student in IIT, it is always as an exchange student. I never had any connections with India and back in France, people are often afraid of going to India because it is so different.

I found it quite easy to approach any student club. Initially, I wasn't aware about various clubs that existed but now, in my second semester here, I know how it works and I even went to play in the football team of Kumaon.

I am comfortable because everyone speaks in English. It was quite easy with the administration initially but getting an extension was difficult and took quite long. To come here, you need to forget your expectations and plunge right in!"



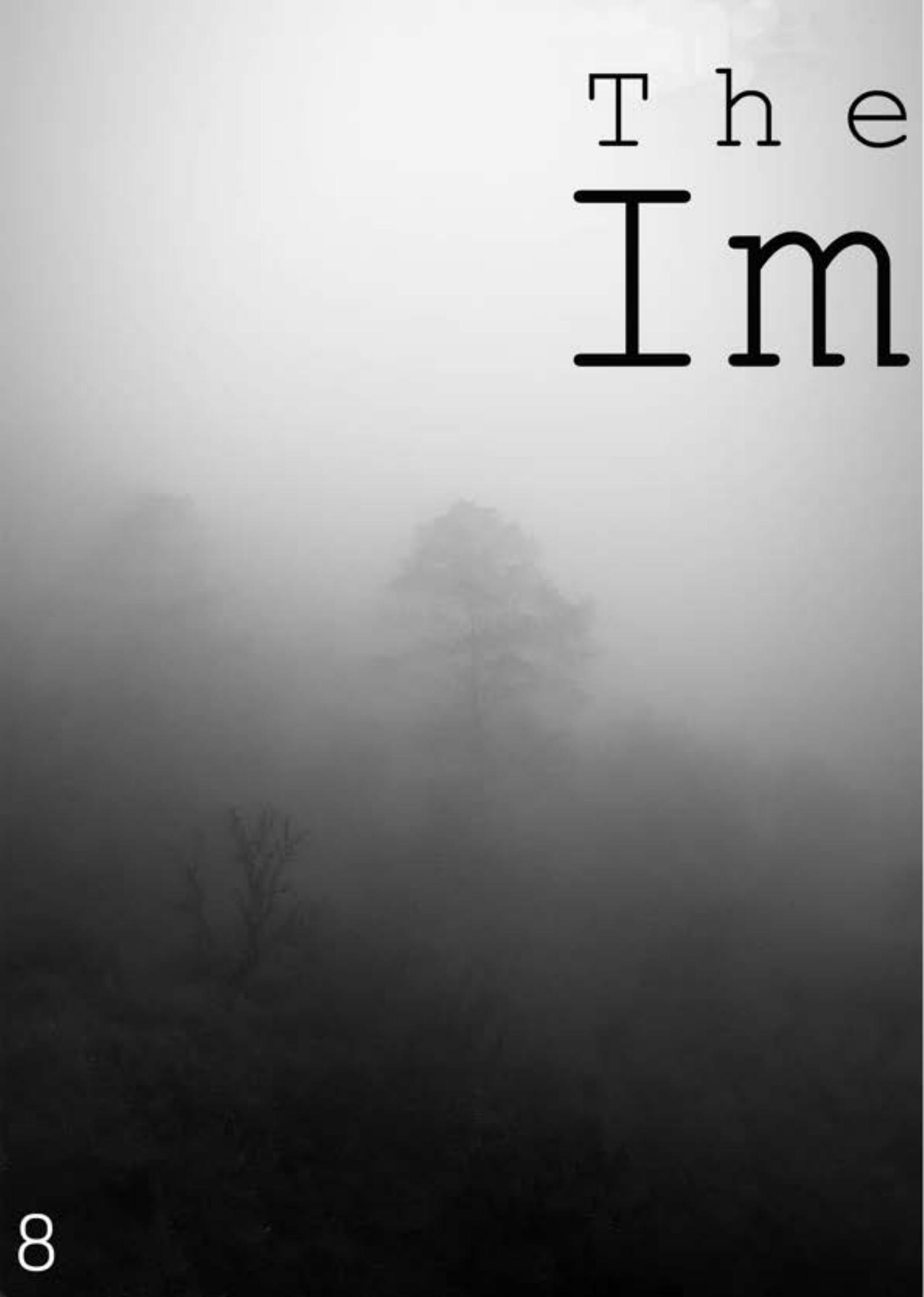
Gourmelon Thibaut

Foreign exchange student, PG
Civil Engineering

Globalisation has been a two way phenomenon for each country. Extending the principles to education, we see the institute taking steps towards building a more foreign friendly community by encouraging foreign exchange for undergraduates and postgraduates, and inculcating courses like those under GIAN (Global Initiative of Academic Networks). There is demand for a more flexible admission and better research facilities if we aspire to attract foreign students and professors.

*The institute has nearly 300 faculty positions (~30% of the total) vacant, and the director has expressed intentions of filling up one-third of them by hiring foreign nationals, who are employed on a five year contract.***

World's perception about India is also transforming positively, and we can expect healthy, fruitful communication and global inclusion in times to come.



The
Im

brooglio

"Do you want to add salt and pepper?" I ask. Not that I expect an answer, but I ask anyway, hoping for one. My question just adds to hundreds of similar attempts to get her to talk, to get any reaction at all.

As expected, she doesn't give any.

It has been almost three days since she's gotten off her bed. Since she's responded to the texts pouring through her phone. If only she understood how much everyone cared for her. If only she had paid attention to the genuine, 'I love you's over the casual 'don't be stupid', she wouldn't be trying to actively cut off every single person wanting to get her out of this hell hole she's driving herself into. Thankfully, she can't push me aside.

I click on the next button on the food ordering app screen, hoping that this won't take too much more effort. Getting her to agree to even this much has been a Herculean task. My credit card lies on the other side of the table. I can never remember the number. Sighing, I brace my hands to lean over the bed, when she mumbles from underneath the blanket she's retreated into once again.

"Don't bother."

My movements unwillingly grind to a halt. "You need to eat!"

"I don't feel like eating today. And it won't make a difference. I don't need to eat. I'll be fine."

I look at her mutely, seeing once again that all my efforts to pull her out of her misery have been nullified. But I couldn't see her starve herself to death either. So this time I steeled myself.

"I choose for both of us."

It's a line from our favourite movie, Room.

Reaching again to grab the phone and haltingly fighting my way across to the confirmation screen, I wonder if she'll find the courage to get out of her insecurities just like Joy did in that film. And Joy had help from her son, Jack. I had to be her Jack because no one else could. She wouldn't allow anyone to.

And why, do you ask, did this burden fall to me, and me alone? Simple. Because I am her. Not her friend, not a fragment of a split personality in an unhinged mind- I am simply, her.

I am the side of her personality that brings hope to the shadows, while she brings caution to the light. I am the one who maintains the stronghold when she is falling, and she keeps me grounded when I'm climbing high. Opposites, you may call us, but complementary nonetheless. We couldn't exist without each other, we wouldn't survive. I was the ying to her yang- the pragmatic salt to her fiery pepper, you might say. And here we were today, me trying to pull her out of her darkness with all the might I had, while she just wanted me to let go. But with the bit of stubbornness that I had borrowed from her and the care that I already had, I was trying to get her to eat, to begin with.

Minutes of silence later, the phone starts buzzing. It's the delivery guy asking for directions. I had ordered her usual Monday lunch, a tuna sub. I answered, already anticipating the meal. I had thought of it as a small symbolic effort to get her back to her usual life.

But who was I kidding, nothing was going to be usual anymore. How could it be? Mom and Dad had given her a year to pursue a career as a writer.

"It's not a secure job, you never know how your book will do, or if any of your books will be loved. There is no regard for small writers. There's already too many of them," were few of the many arguments she had faced.

After a lot of fighting, crying and convincing they gave me a year for my dreams. They even allowed a separate flat for the "free flow of Ideas" as asked.

It's already been a year and a half. No publisher is ready to publish my book. I work in a small newshouse, writing things that don't excite me. Last week I was rejected by another publisher. He was my last hope.

That was it for Mom and Dad. With my finances hitting an all-time low, they've asked me to come back home and find a job worthy of my degree. They gave their ultimatum three days ago. Since then everything seems lost.

When you've held onto something for so long, it's not so easy to let go.

But also, I knew that before you succeed, there is going to be an infinite struggle. To get through all of it, you'll need an infinite amount of patience, something that was running out fast. At some point even I believed that things couldn't go on the way they were. It had to stop.

The doorbell rings.

I snap back to reality. Shaking my head at myself, I rub my forehead tiredly, I wasn't supposed to let myself be consumed by what had happened, I was supposed to get us back to normal.

I drag myself and her to get the door, expecting no one else apart from the delivery guy- but as I open the door I see two people standing in front of me.

One, as expected, is the delivery person. The other is Dhruv.

I've known him since we were in class 11th. There were at least 30 missed calls from him in the past 3 days. He had come yesterday too, but she hadn't let me answer the door or his calls.



For a moment, I couldn't believe my eyes. While receiving the food, I was trying to comprehend the fact that he actually was here right now.

She decides to ignore him, so I press my lips together and tighten my grip on the sandwich, readying myself to close the door on him.

"Would you at least let me talk to you please?", he asks.

Her fear of him influencing me into actually letting him in driving her, she steps forward, determined to send him away with all the courage and anger she could

muster. But seeing his expression, she can't hold back her tears. The sobs wrench their way up my throat.

"Go. Please."

She shuts the door on him and falls against it, drained. I can see a mixture of anger and pain on her face as she turns towards me.

"Did you call him here?"

Did I? No. But then, how could he have known?

Wait.

12



Suddenly, I remember. His premium food delivery account is logged in my phone. He must have seen me ordering the food and made the decision to grab onto the opportunity.

Dhruv has always been an optimistic piece of sunshine, from whom you'll get nothing but good vibes. He has the best answers for all troubles. And he has supported us always, through thick and thin. So much so that I often feel guilty of being dependent on him for my mental upliftment.

But at this point, it was working in reverse. That's the thing about depression, it compels you to look at the bad side of things. Seeing Dhruv is reminding her of how good things in the past are lost now. She misses being the old carefree person.

There is a shuffling of feet outside. He still hasn't left. I hear him sitting against the door.

"Do you remember when we used to go to the lake?", he starts speaking, unbothered by the barrier between us. "We used to throw pebbles and make wishes. The wish whose pebble went farthest would come



true, we'd think. Remember how hard we'd throw it if we really really wished for something deep from our hearts. You wished for a big house and lots of shoes. I wanted to complete my comic book collection and have those trendy goggles. We both wanted to go to a Coldplay concert.

"Remember how crazy we went when one of those actually came true? Remember you actually got to visit the art exhibition outside town. You were so happy. And then," he chuckles, "our mandatory celebration ice cream at Havmor."

"I loved those, but you said it was never about those wishes, really. Wishes with the softest thrown pebbles would come true and sometimes the ones we really really wanted wouldn't. You said it didn't matter if it didn't come true. It was good enough that we dared to dream. You said..," he says

and then pauses mid-sentence as if expecting her to complete it.

I look at her and see that tears are still sliding down her face. Though this time, her tears feel healing. However much she didn't want them to, something that he said had broken through.

"You know I went to the lake yesterday", he starts speaking again. "I threw a pebble so hard, it almost went right across. You know what I wished? I wished I would see you by this week. And here I am. It came true."

"Would you like to come with me for our mandatory Ice cream at Havmor?".
Touched, I bend down and take her hand.

"I know this is hard," I say softly. "I know it's painful. I know there seems no way out. But don't we have the strength to get back up?"

"I'm tired of fighting," she whispers. "What if I was wrong. What if a desk job is all I deserve. What if - "

"What if you were right?" I cut her off. "Maybe the desk job is where you'll find your will to fight for your dreams again. Maybe living Mom and Dad will help you find your old self and your old confidence."

"How do you know? How do you know that starting at square one won't lead me back right here again?"

I look at her, unable to find the assurance she needed. There is a shuffling of feet outside, and I realize that Dhruv is about to leave. I can't let that happen. In the last three days, this is the farthest that I have able to come with her.

Suddenly determined, I say to her, "You're right. I don't know if we won't end up here. But it isn't about the number of times we fall. It's the number of times we pick ourselves up. It's about keeping the hope to fulfil our dreams alive. Because remember what we used to say at the lake?"

I paused and she looked at me. Bending down, I gently wipe the tears from my eyes. "It's about time you go and have that celebratory ice cream. Didn't you wish to find a way out of this? Here he is - but he'll leave soon."

"You're right", she nods, stuffily wiping my tears. She pushes herself to her feet and opens the door. Dhruv is almost out of sight.

"I remember what I said!" she shouts. He turns around. She speaks with my voice, with my hope. "I said, if we have the courage to hope then we'll find the will to complete it inside us."

He walks back to me slowly, disbelieving. I smile and whisper, "And where there is a will, there is a way."

Unable to find words, he smiles, the expression lighting up his face.

"Now for the ice cream, which one am I getting?"



काँच का घर

किससे पूछूँ जो मोहब्बत का सही मायना बयान करे,
किससे बताऊँ जो मेरी बंदगी फर्ज-ए-आसान करे,
काँच की इन दीवारों में यह कैसा पर्दा है बंदों से,
जो पाकीजगी देखने की भी भीख माँगता हो अँधों से ।

कत्ल-ए-उल्फत किया जमाने ने न जाने क्या जान के,
मैं, तुम, वो, सब ही रचना हैं भगवान के,
फिर भी बदतरीन हम दोनों, सुना है हमारी खबर है,
लडकी ने लडकी से प्रेम किया, यह कैसा अस्वभाविक कहर है ।

प्यार नहीं जुर्म हो गया जो थामा यूँ हमने हाथ,
क्यों नहीं है मंजूर जमाने को अपना साथ,
खुद पे सवाल उठाने पर कर दिया मुझे मजबूर,
तानों के पत्थर बरसाए हम पर, यह कैसा फितूर ।

काँच का घर है मेरी मोहब्बत,
इसकी तामीर करते सदियाँ गई बीत,
देखा मैंने यह एक ख्वाब है,
जिसमे हो बस प्यार की जीत ।

दुनिया ने आज तक है दबाए मेरे जज्बात,
और जो कल भी न हो पाए अपनी मुकम्मल मुलाकात,
फिर भी इस ख्वाब को आप से रूठने न देना,
मेरी मोहब्बत काँच का घर है, इसे टूटने न देना ।

ये इंसानयित का काफिला है मेरे दोस्तों, बातों से नहीं बह जाएगा ।
ये मोहब्बत का काफिला है मेरे दोस्तों, नफरत से नहीं ढह जाएगा ॥

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