

ENGLISH
DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER
KALINDI COLLEGE

CAMEO

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Principal's note



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

Prof. Meena Charanda





PROSE

On What's Mortal, Grotesque And Transitory

Who'll bury the moon if it's a mortal? Grotesque and transitory. Composed of flesh and bones. On an unforgiving night, he says- "I'm all hollow and the dread keeps consuming me like a dog biting on a lump of bone enjoying the blood of its own jaw. I keep hurting myself."

Here's the same old story of life, death and the unbearable tragedy of the same.

You know why there's flesh over bones? It says- "Life always begins soft and mellow. When someone digs deeper, they see right through the bodies; what lies beneath, what is kept from the world. The mortifying ordeal of being known as eradicated like a cancerous blob from someone's existence."

Someday the moon will die and thump on the ground. There'll be no one to bury the unsightly, lifeless body. How terrible of a fate it is to die unmourned. How despair has its teeth gnawing at the decaying flesh trying to extract all that is left. An insipid taste of blood. A harrowing odour of the decay. The dead long for some understanding too I think. An incomplete body; a safe pair of hands holding it from splitting like a child's toy. An amputated hand on the crossroad; a pair of kind eyes looking at it wondering what horrible thing happened here instead of looking away and calling the scene unsettling.

Once buried, the dead look up at the sky more often than the alive do.
Sating maybe, there's much more grief in death. Grief of losing oneself.
The physical form.

In the end, maggots are always left as an exhibit of the loss.
The question remains- "Who'll bury the moon if it's a mortal?"

Muskan Pal, IInd Year



My Little Lamb

I remember the old drying river near the village, carrying the little life left inside, thrumming its way towards us. I remember asking you to stop there for a while because I was afraid of that dying dog on our way back home, who laid there with his flesh and bones and skin scattered on the dusty road. I remember feeling frigid, I remember feeling a carnivorous desire to eat him, I lied to you, I wasn't afraid of the dog, I was afraid of something flagitious inside my heart that seemed to crawl up my throat every time I looked into his eyeballs, full of void.

You stood there, back turned to my malefic cravings, carrying me in your arms, rocking me on your hip and bathing me in your warmth as I hummed the lullaby you always sang to me. You looked beautiful, I remember being full of your love. I was so full of your love.

It was late July, one of those balmy nights, of maroon and blue sky. It was not past midnight when I heard you choke on a sob. I wanted to open my eyes, just a little bit, but I didn't, I'm sorry I couldn't open my eyes, I'm sorry I couldn't turn and put my hand on your hand, I'm sorry I couldn't cradle you in my lap and wipe your tears, and I'm sorry it was because of me that you wept so silently like an abandoned pet.

I'm sorry I didn't even stir when you clutched my shirt so tightly like you were burning in agony. I'm sorry, I was afraid to see my teeth marks sunken in your neck. I'm sorry you were dying beside me, and I pretended to sleep.

You must have thought I was so vile. You must think I'm so vile. I haven't forgotten, Mom. I'm so sorry I was so vile.

-Your feral child.

Vandna, IInd Year



My Country Is Unique And So Am I

When I ponder upon this, only my childhood comes to my mind, belonging to the East of India with parents who come from West Bengal. In search of a better life, they came to Delhi. Only to realise it was nothing like their peaceful village back home. It was not a metropolitan back then, but somewhat only the capital. No taste of home did they find, with migrants coming from all over India.

Delhi slowly became a melting pot of culture. I remember when I was a child how unique my lunch box was from my friends. Being the only Bengali in my class my mom used to give me dishes which were not conventionally eaten. When I started to share my lunch box with my friends, it felt as if I was sharing a part of my home with them. It was only through them that I had my first bite of paneer.

Strange isn't it?

My mom didn't know how to cook it and when the 2G network was on our hands, no help from YouTube was at our ease. Then we did what scientists do – Trial and error, with some occasional help from our neighbours, until we understood how to properly cook it. And slowly, but not smoothly, we invited new dishes on our plate and somewhere along the way we also became a member of the society.

Many say that the way to a person's heart is through food, but I say not only to one's heart but food also acts as a subtle catalyst to another culture. Through my lunch box, I invited others to my culture and through theirs, I became a part of society.

This act of give and take between cultures is what actually makes each culture unique and at its heart the countrymen unique too. So the next time I opened my lunch box, the smell of mustard oil became a hearty fragrance, the use of poppy seeds became an addicting addition to the dish and the use of sugar in every dish made the food taste even better.

Food is a big part of any culture and as long as we share it, we not only make new acquaintances through food but also preserve our culture through propagating it. So the next time you see me offering my lunch box to you.

Maybe I wanna be friends with you...

Sanchita Maji, IInd Year



Reclaiming The Bloom: Shifting The Floral Metaphor From Fragility To Strength

I've been very intrigued by the idea of equating women with flowers. McLeod explains how over the past years women have reclaimed the definition of being equated to flora, one that symbolised us as being frail, passive, dependent, givers of life, objects of beauty, soft to the touch, incapable of functioning without support, debarred from having agency, a spectacle to gawk at whenever one wills. The reclamation of this floral imagery now signifies individuality, growth and strength and is now celebrated.

Though it's incredibly remarkable how the use of this botanical metaphor has been shifted in order to butt heads with and question the power dynamic that was created with it, it's personally very difficult for me to rid myself of the traditional meaning this metaphor harbours.

The idea that we are nurturers, who bloom just to fulfil our maternal responsibilities, just to exude love, keep giving and offering, existing just to satiate the voyeuristic desires of onlookers, our weaving into something more aesthetically palatable for the delight of the observer's gaze, hands viciously reaching out from every nook and cranny, yanking us out of our 'safe spaces'.

Being equated to a flower has always reminded me of reduced mobility, how it is restricted and constantly under threat. A flower is passive but when uprooted it gets the opportunity to be moved around though only according to the animal's will when it is plucked.

Stuck between the animal's teeth like it is its rightful property, the flower passively observes wherever the animal takes it, the eye of surveillance hovering above it. It is rendered powerless in the face of those who want to uproot it, the little 'freedom' it can experience is only during the short moments of rest the animal takes by placing it on the ground. That too comes with a condition; the flower must not grow roots where it is placed and must readily accept the animal's supremacy, its right to bloom curtailed, its potential never tapped, always being made to adhere to properties that make it vulnerable, being forced to be dependent, being forced to not object to the path the animal takes it along because that's just the way it is and has been.

Question authority and you lose the very little space you made a patriarchal bargain for. Being compared and comparing myself to a flower raises violent images in my head that I wish I could expunge from my memory altogether. I'm irrevocably in love with their beauty and magic but the narratives associated with them are profoundly distressing.

Kaafi unlearning and relearning ki zaroorat hai.

Apoorva, 1st Year



POETRY

Beloved

In the hollows of the ivory tower,
Where once her presence filled the air,
Shhhh!

It's all silence that surrounds now,
Like a mournful shroud,
The empty room danced in her laughter
And now in her absence, the hallowed halls dwell
The hallowed halls, now cold and still,
Echo with the ghostly whispers
Of her wisdom, her laughter, her grace,
Now lost to time's relentless rivers,
Of rivers that no more flow
Morrison's Beloved haunts these walls,
Like a spectre of love and loss,
Like a poor singer who forgot the verse of his song
Like Macbeth who lost it all I wander through the corridors
I wander more often than ever
Seeking solace, seeking signs of her memory
Where Plath was a mirror to our despair,
Where resurrection could get me and her to air

She is the emptiness I feel inside me, I feel trapped
As the butterfly gets caught in its own wings
Like the humans in their own skin in the puzzled depths of
grief,
There's hope
Hope of finding words in my drawer,
Hopes of finding her echoes under the carpet
Of yearning, of torment.
This ink has been dried for months.
But I painted the portrait of longing.
I painted the portrait of loss.
I painted the emptiness left by her cross.
But listen, I am angry.
I am angry more than I am upset.
I'm angry. I know you're listening, and I'm angry.
You let my books upon the shelves grow dim,
You let my pages stain with tears unshed,
You let my stories fade, and grow thin.
She was more than who taught me how a chokecherry tree
could look like,
She was more than Morgan's finding the two letter word
She was more than Plath's resurrected soul
She was a beacon in the darkness,
She was a guiding light,

She was a presence time cannot erase.
You took her away from me You took her away...
Her voice, Her laughter, Her melody of joy,
But never take the knowledge, my beloved.
Her absence leaves a void so vast,
A void no words can hope to bury.
Yet, I turn to the written word,
Hoping to find her spirit there,
Yearning to see her smiling face.
And in every word I find her I find her voice
I find her melody and I find her legacy enshrined.

Vanshika, IIIrd Year



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Growing Up Is?

Growing Up Is?

As you're climbing up the stairs and facing the dangers
Soon your best friends become strangers.
You see your life changing in light.
Lollipops turn into cigarettes, homework goes into the trash.
People start saying things in different ways that you just can't
shake down.
Remember when getting high only meant swinging in the
playground?
When you didn't even care if you looked "fantastic"
Siblings were your worst enemies, and race meant who ran the
fastest
When a smile could easily brighten your face just as the first
rains fell
The only thing that hurt you were grazed knees and goodbyes
meant until tomorrow.
We do not act like it but every day we're sinking.
When we said "I can't wait to grow up" what were we thinking?
We're living our lives daily but all we do is look behind
We have messy rooms, all we do is stay online
Now we have rigid thoughts while our determination wavers

We go to bed late, have private things on our mobiles and are
crazy about our crushes all the time
Where scolding doesn't work we get insults
Has anyone thought that we're treated like children but
expected to act like adults?
Everyone needs to understand we are still learning, things
happen "cause life is a big and long journey and we have just
begun." So, grab your snacks, don't think too much, board the
flight and hop in.

Avni Chaudhary, Ist Year



Final Sleep : How Bad Can Death Possibly Be?

How bad can death possibly be?

What ruins can it do to one?

Isn't it necessary to leave the place where you are mistreated
to get to the place where your heart truly belongs?

To lie down and rewind the best of memories we ever had in
those last minutes,

And the sound of a machine declaring triumph over my ruins.

"Death do us part" is what I said, but never heard it back,

Guess it is agreeable to saypack, "I'll be the one to depart and
pack."

How can it be bad? When all it does is to free one of miseries.

Leaving the world with their tale, imprinting a plausible history.

"Death does us apart", but that's what will unite us.

How can one call it bad, when we'll meet at the crossing of the
bridge as discussed?

How can I fear it?

When it was the only one to help us get together.

Death does us apart, but that's what got us close.

Living together and dying together, our saga frozen in the
beds of earth, while we lay in the yard of roses.

Death.

The only love I got.

The only one to be loved.

This wretch of mine wants all of me for himself

But how can I deny my fate when it's long-awaited as the
TBR list on my shelf ~

Vanshika Jindal, Ist Year



Black Swan

In a world of mirrors and whispers,
I dance on glass, my heart in a twister.
Striving for perfection, I push myself harder,
To be the best, to stand out as a starter.
But in this pursuit, I lose sight of who I am.
Caught up in the dance, like a broken dam.
The darkness surrounds me, its grip so tight,
As I struggle to find my inner light.
My soul, a black swan, trapped in a cage,
Yearning to break free from this self-made stage.
The price I pay for perfection's embrace,
In losing myself in this endless chase.
The darkness seeps through my veins,
Filling my mind with its haunting strains.
Yet, I must keep dancing, put on a show,
Hide the pain, let no one know.
Whispers from within, the black swan's plea,
To embrace my true self and set myself free.
As time rolls on and the dance goes on,
My once vibrant ballet turns black and wan.
In the mirror's reflection, I see the toll,

A hollow gaze, a weary soul.
My body frail, my spirit worn,
From neglecting my needs, my heart was torn.
The pressure to be great, to be the best,
This pursuit consumes me, my every stride,
In search of perfection, I've lost my guide.
But still, the darkness creeps, its flames grow higher,
As I dance and dance, consumed by its fire.
The music that once lifted my spirit, now a haunting
reminder of my plight.
I whisper to myself, "I am but a shadow in this light."
I have become the masterpiece I sought to be,
And as my body lays lifeless on the stage,
The Black Swan lives on through me,
My final and greatest work of art.
For in my death, "I have achieved perfection".
The Black Swan has consumed me,
Leaving behind only my lifeless shell.

Rashi Vyas, Ist Year



Why Am I Still Awake?

Why am I still awake?
It's past my bedtime, I usually get sleepy by now.
Is something bothering me inside?
Or am I just procrastinating?
Everything seems fine, it always is,
But this time it feels difficult.
Eating something might help,
But I'm craving nothing,
Should probably try to sleep again,
But isn't it too late?
Maybe wait till morning now?
Writing helps, right?
That empty journal needs to be fed,
Fed with these scattered thoughts of mine,
Reason behind my insomnia might be in there,
But now it's already dawn,
And I feel drowsy,
As I crawl up in my bed,
With the journal in my hand, I'm finally asleep.

Pradyunma, Ist Year



ARTWORK



Kanak Singh
Ist Year



Kanak Singh
Ist Year



Kanak Singh
Ist Year



Avika mishra
Ist Year



ABOUT CAMEO

The English Department is one of the oldest in Kalindi College. Till recently it had the distinction of teaching each student who has studied in this college, be it whichever course they may have taken. The English Department is known for its excellence in classroom teaching and interaction. Through the departmental society Mitrakshar (English Literary Society) it has over the years organized intellectually stimulating programmes for the students. We have hosted inter departmental programmes and fests and brought together students from various colleges to engage with and deepen our understanding of the world and how we may transform ourselves through literature.

Although the college has a number of publications, including the newsletter as well as a student magazine. The English Department also has an online publication of which this is the eighth volume, second issue. This publication is an attempt to go beyond merely academic engagement of the students in their discipline via projects/project presentations. The department enthusiastically carries on its online publication in the spirit of nurturing the innate talents of its students.

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