

The Objective Reality

Volume 3 July, 2024

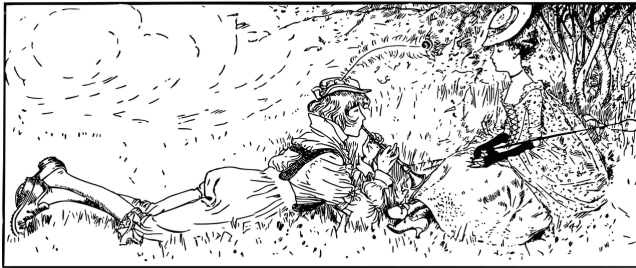
The FOOL



“

It's what you have always wanted to accomplish. Everyone, when they are young, knows what their destiny is. At that point in their lives, everything is clear and everything is possible. They are not afraid to dream, and to yearn for everything they would like to see happen to them in their lives. But, as time passes, a mysterious force begins to convince them that it will be impossible for them to realize their destiny . . . It's a force that appears to be negative, but actually shows you how to realize your destiny. It prepares your spirit and you will, because there is one great truth on this planet: whoever you are, or whatever it is that you do, when you really want something, it's because that desire originated in the soul of the universe. It's your mission on earth.

-PAULO COELHO // 'THE ALCHEMIST'



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Dear reader,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our two-part series depicting the Fool's Journey. This edition, titled *The Fool*, sets the stage for a literary exploration inspired by the timeless symbolism of the Fool card from the tarot deck. The Fool represents the beginning of a journey, a leap into the unknown fueled by boundless curiosity, courage, and resilience.

In tarot, the Fool is often depicted as a figure standing at the edge of a cliff, about to step forward with a heart full of hope and a spirit unburdened by fear. This image captures the essence of what it means to take a leap of faith, to embrace the unknown with a sense of adventure and trust in oneself.

Our writers have interpreted this theme through various lenses, offering stories, poems, and essays that delve into the myriad ways in which we all embody the Fool at different points in our lives. Whether it's a tale of personal transformation, an exploration of new beginnings, or a reflection on the courage required to pursue one's dreams, each piece in this issue is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

This issue celebrates those who dare to step into the unknown, who embrace change with open arms, and who find strength in vulnerability. It is a tribute to the adventurers, the dreamers, and the brave souls who remind us that the journey is just as important as the destination.

As you immerse yourself in these stories, may you find inspiration in the Fool's unwavering belief in the journey ahead. And as you anticipate our next issue, *The World*, remember that every step you take, no matter how uncertain, is a step toward greater understanding and fulfillment.

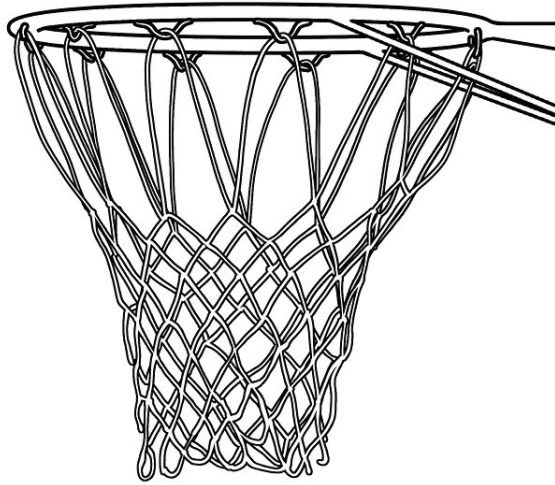
Thank you for joining us on this literary adventure!

NANDITA
Editor-in-chief

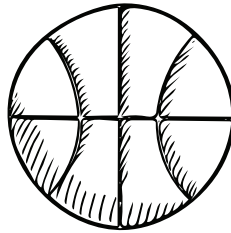
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A PROMISE FULFILLED



► As laughter echoed through the park, a rhythmic thud of basketballs hitting the pavement created a steady beat. A sense of vibrancy filled the air. Young players ran across the court, their energy infectious. Among them, an older man moved with a mix of caution and determination, his presence both unexpected and peculiar. In the stands, two friends struck up a conversation. One, a regular visitor named Aruna, leaned back, her eyes following the older man on the court. The other, Jai, was new to the park and curious.



by Deepa Menon

“Who’s the old guy?” said Jai, chuckling as he pointed towards the field. “Does he really think he can keep up with those kids?”

Aruna smiled, “That’s Guru uncle. Stick around, and he might surprise you.”

Jai glanced over at Guru uncle again, puzzled. “Why does he even bother? He’s too old for sports, anyway.”

Aruna shrugged, “I guess you’ll have to watch and find out.”

As the game began, Jai couldn’t help but find the sight of Guru uncle amusing. The older man moved much slower than the younger players, but each step of his was deliberate, every action measured. Jai smirked: this was

*What appears foolish
at first can reveal
something much
deeper upon closer
inspection, Jai. Just sit
here for a while.*

surely a waste of time. As the game progressed, the young players showed their respect for Guru, passing him the ball and listening to his advice during breaks. Jai noticed but didn’t quite understand. “Do they really take him seriously?”

Aruna nodded. “More than you might think,” she said. “He’s got the experience, and he’s got the heart. Sometimes that counts for more than speed or strength. It’s easy to overlook, but there’s often more beneath the surface. What appears foolish at first can reveal something much deeper upon closer inspection, Jai. Just sit here for a while.”

The game was getting intense. Though his speed had waned with age, Guru’s movements displayed a practised precision. Jai watched in silence. Maybe there was more to Guru uncle than what meets the eye. “He’s not just playing a game, is he?”

“No,” Aruna replied softly. “Every shot he takes, every pass he makes, it’s for the dreamer he used to be. Isn’t it fascinating, Jai, that true passion never ages? The pursuit of dreams is lifelong.”

Jai’s interest piqued. “So, he’s out here trying to relive his glory days?”

Aruna shook her head. “Not quite. He’s here for the boy he once was, the one who couldn’t chase his dreams back then. Now, he’s got the time and means, and age . . . well, it’s just a number to him.”

The match reached its peak. The score was close, and the tension palpable. Guru, despite his hunched back, made a remarkable play, intercepting a

pass and shooting a three-pointer. The crowd erupted in cheers, and the younger players rallied around him.

Jai found himself applauding. "That was incredible!"

"You see, Guru uncle wasn't always an old man," Aruna continued, sensing Jai's curiosity. "He had dreams, big ones. Wanted to go pro, but life didn't cooperate. No resources, no support. But his love for the game never died."

The final whistle blew. Guru uncle's team had lost by a narrow margin. But as he walked off the court, his face lit up with a smile that spoke volumes. It was a smile of fulfilment, of dreams realised, and of a promise kept. A promise he had made to himself years ago: don't give up on the game, and the game won't give up on you.

"That's Guru uncle for you," Aruna said. "He might not always win, but he always plays with his heart."

"He doesn't look like someone who just lost," Jai's eyes sparkled.

Aruna turned to him, a gentle wisdom in her eyes. "Winning isn't everything. Sometimes, just being in the game, living out your passion is the real victory."

As the crowd dispersed, Jai lingered for a moment, watching Guru uncle pack up his gear. Jai found his heart lighter and his mind richer for the experience. He had come to the court expecting a simple game, but he left with a profoundly altered view on life. He realised that the most meaningful victories are not always those celebrated with scores or trophies. Instead, they are the quiet triumphs found in the relentless pursuit of one's dreams and the joy of living authentically. Even if such pursuits appear naive to the world, they carry a wisdom and fulfilment far beyond conventional success. That was the moment when Jai understood the genuine contentment on Guru's face. It was the courage of a fool, the courage of an old man to follow his passion deeply, unapologetically, completely, truly!

Even if such pursuits appear naive to the world, they carry a wisdom and fulfilment far beyond conventional success.

Nightmares & Fireflies

BY HARSH SRIVASTAV

Warm ambience of maturing cold,
A life that's put on eternal hold,
Faded colors, silvery gold
Some wailing stories remain untold.

A nightmare that remains,
In the eyes long awake,
The genesis of evil,
For some virtue's sake

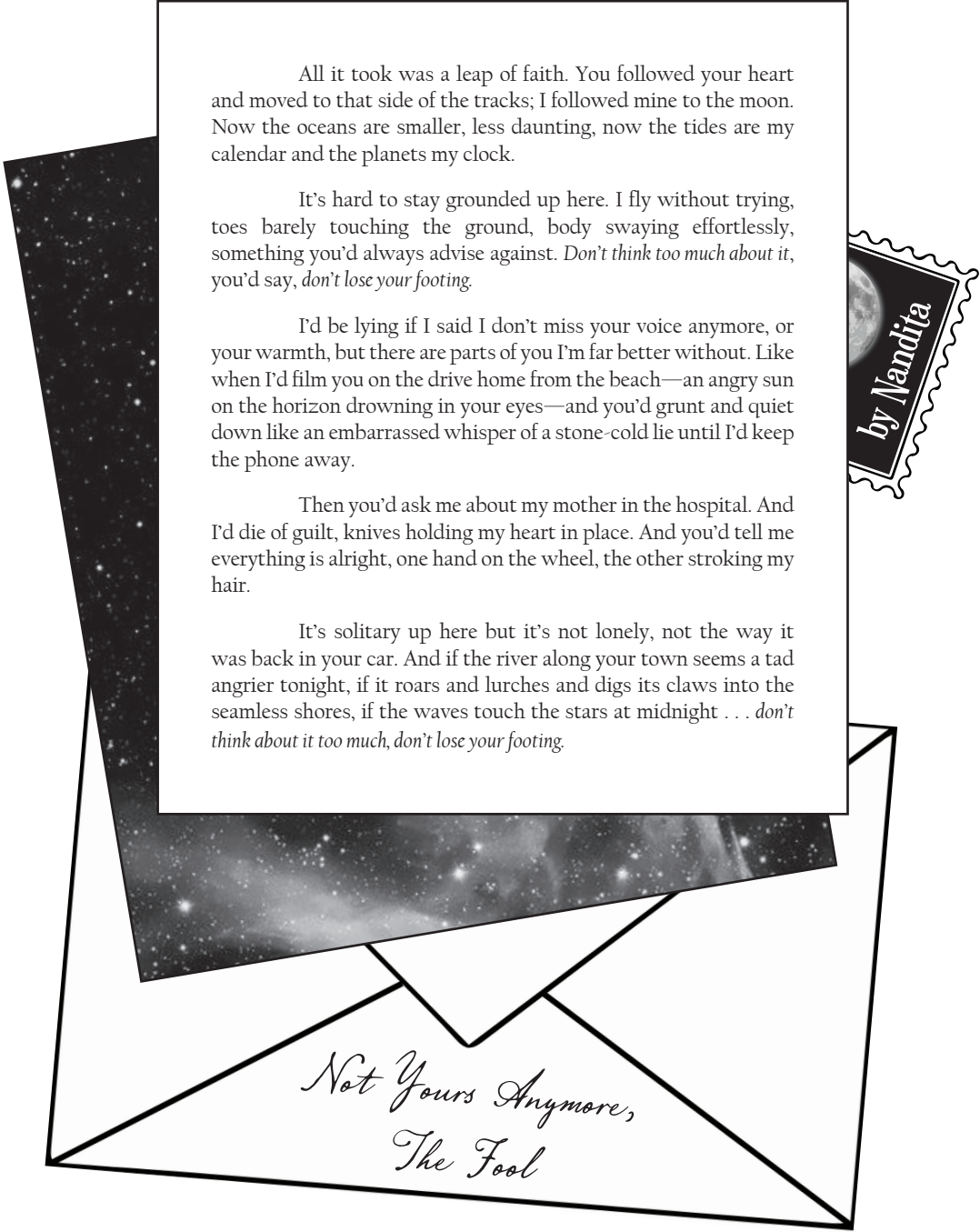
A dance of agony,
On the corpse of hope,
A deep steep cliff
The weaker end of the rope.

Serpentine darkness crawling,
In the moon-lit room
"Rage against the dying of the light"
Someone cried from Dylan's tomb.

Estranged relations, severed bonds
Once breathed life, the stinking ponds
The old curse that's come alive,
Rise of the Leviathan, look ye yond.

Still the shapes, the figures, the phantoms
In the permeating pall from a dark lantern
As absurd as the being of man,
As absurd as the rings of Saturn.

*but then the fireflies.
gather round the sulking Deor
nightingale. opium. hills and breeze
are perhaps the earthly cure.*



All it took was a leap of faith. You followed your heart
and moved to that side of the tracks; I followed mine to the moon.
Now the oceans are smaller, less daunting, now the tides are my
calendar and the planets my clock.

It's hard to stay grounded up here. I fly without trying,
toes barely touching the ground, body swaying effortlessly,
something you'd always advise against. *Don't think too much about it,*
you'd say, *don't lose your footing.*

I'd be lying if I said I don't miss your voice anymore, or
your warmth, but there are parts of you I'm far better without. Like
when I'd film you on the drive home from the beach—an angry sun
on the horizon drowning in your eyes—and you'd grunt and quiet
down like an embarrassed whisper of a stone-cold lie until I'd keep
the phone away.

Then you'd ask me about my mother in the hospital. And
I'd die of guilt, knives holding my heart in place. And you'd tell me
everything is alright, one hand on the wheel, the other stroking my
hair.

It's solitary up here but it's not lonely, not the way it
was back in your car. And if the river along your town seems a tad
angrier tonight, if it roars and lurches and digs its claws into the
seamless shores, if the waves touch the stars at midnight . . . *don't*
think about it too much, don't lose your footing.

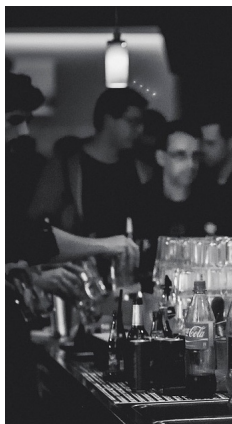
*Not Yours Anymore,
The Fool*

THIS WAS MEANT TO BE

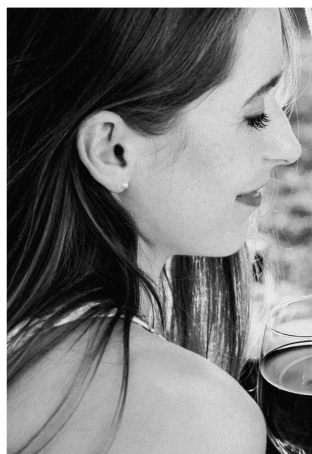
by Pallavi Yadav

Chloe Reverie was sitting around the bar table at the Cheers Lounge, lost in thought. All the mess that happened today at her office weighed heavily on her mind. Her CEO had warned her that if she didn't come with a great news this week, she would be fired. Today, sitting in this bar, she couldn't even remember gulping down three martinis since she got there.

She felt someone standing behind her. As she turned around, a man in his late twenties with blue eyes, curly hair, and a chiselled jawline stood smiling at her. He was tall, muscular, and heavenly handsome. Was it a Greek god she was seeing? Stunned by his appearance, it took her a moment to come back to her senses as he snapped his fingers. He extended his hand towards her as a gesture to ask her for a dance. She smirked as she glanced over his shoulder at a table further down the back of the room, then stood up and leaned to whisper in his ear, "I'll be your date tonight, but only if you promise to share your winnings from that bet you made with your friends over there."



A mix of embarrassment and awe flashed across his face.





"Yes, ma'am," he said. "And I'll be grateful to you for saving me from shame." She took his hand, and he walked her to the dance floor. "Sway" by Michael Bublé was played in the background. They started dancing, so in sync that it seemed as if they had known each other for a very long time. Their eyes met; she wasn't sure what she was feeling, but she found it hard to match his gaze. He was about to speak but before he could, he felt a push on his back. He turned around only to realise that a girl in a white peplum dress puked on his shoes.



"I'm sorry...I'm really sorry," the girl said, covering her mouth. Before he could process it, Chloe came forward, "Naomi, what are you doing here? Shouldn't you be with Nick at your dream concert? Here, let me take you to the ladies' room and we'll fix you up." Chloe put her hand on Naomi's shoulder and helped her to the restroom. When Chloe was sure Naomi was alright, she asked, "What's going on? Will you please tell me?"

"I will explain it all. Trust me, it's a long story. Will you please forgive me this last time?" Naomi said.

Before she could speak, someone knocked on the door. "Oh, it's Nick. Where were you, and why is she drunk?"

The girls seemed upset so Nick stayed silent. Chloe wondered if they had another fight and if it was going to fall upon her to resolve it. How was it that she could solve everyone else's problems but she had no one to solve hers?

"Oh my! I completely forgot about him." Chloe said, hurrying back to the corner where she had left her date. For once, she was putting herself first.

She looked around, but he was nowhere to be found. Defeated, she was about to give up when she heard,





“Are you searching for me
by any chance?”

“Don’t flatter yourself,”
she smiled, hiding her joy.
“I’m sorry for my friend; believe it or not,
she is rather sensible when she’s sober.”

“Don’t worry about it;
I had an extra pair of shoes in my car.
By the way, I’m Jeremiah,”
he said, suddenly realising they never exchanged names.
“Jeremiah Kinciad. And you?”

“I’m Chloe Reverie, and I have a knack of being
caught up in the most embarrassing of circumstances.”

“I don’t think so,” Jeremiah said.
“It was nice meeting you, Chloe.
Can I have your number,
just in case you still want to share that money?”
He winked.

**When we dance you have a way with me
Stay with me, sway with me**



There's a chilling in the bones,
As the wind brushes past,
Bridging the gaps
Enveloped around farce sensations.



Post Winters

A chilling that imbibes,
The life out of an instant,
A chilling that resonates,
Making them immobile - the visible alive.

A chilling that's quiet,
That steals the sight.
I wonder, of its enormous might,
For the wind travels,
Instills the effect, one soul to the next.

BY
HARSHIT
SINGH



For it's treacherous,
For it carries within,
The sounds of elated hours,
The life of the dead flowers,
Ones that once bloomed,
Before the cursed touch.



For it's foreboding,
For it smells
Of the moisture of innocent showers,
Ones that never touched,
The spirit of unholy grounds.

For it whispers the lies,
The promises of the graveyard.
For it carries within,
Beauty of eternal miseries.
They call it spring.



There's a shiver down the spine,
As the wind brushes past.
An eternal calling,
Those smells of forbidden grounds.
A shiver that deceives the valves,
Advancing a quiet chaos.
A shiver that breathes remorse,
Choking on myn ethos.
A shiver of stillness,
A quake in poisoned chambers,
Delivering bewitched chaos.

I call it madness.

Chasing TALES

BY NANDITA

I USUALLY FIND HIM LURKING IN THE DARKEST OF ALLEYS, a lean form made of cruel syntax and half-baked ideas. He wears long, grey overcoats and collects vintage wristwatches to clip upon his inseam ticket pockets. Sometimes he stops and tips his hat towards me, a jester's hello. Sometimes, if it's a lonely night, or the hours are quickly faring towards dawn, he stops to chat a while. But most times, when he notices me among the peculiar crowd of a clumsy street lined with bars and poker-houses, he simply smiles. Not a smile of acknowledgement, no, but a smile made out of an all-pervading command over the spectacle itself, one that a scientist might allow himself when he proves a particularly challenging hypothesis, a mixture of relief and rage. On such rare instances, I walk with him deeper into the night, never daring to get too close, never on the same sidewalk.

I feel him around me, creating havoc inside my mind like the low rumblings of a great cloud that is on the verge of bursting atop a hillslope, like the crackling of an overhead electricity cable in heavy rains.

We enter the same cafe; sit at different tables.

Two tables for two, two chairs for one;
a pinch of solitude, a coffee with a bun?

We take the same, narrow road to the lighthouse on the beach, our steps in mutual imitation but never crossing paths. We lean together on either side of the scaffolding around the lighthouse and watch the water fold and churn itself onto the banks, waltzing with the tidings of the moon, seeking nothing.

He lights a cigarette; I stare at the empty page in my notebook.

Water, water, rise and fall;
Words evade this tower tall.

In the light of his matchstick, I see part of his face, rugged textured and sharp of features, old by no means but not young either. His eye, the one I could glance upon, was a picture of stringent thought, a well-bred practice, almost second nature to him. He was of the realm of rationale, of philosophy, of logic, of order, and an invisible sheath separated him from me. I belonged to the open fields of manic abundance, of creation, of chaos, of fertility. I scribbled him a message on my notepad, ripped it off and placed it gently under his fingers resting on the blue and white fencing of the lighthouse. He chuckled gently and gave a sloppy, informal, two-fingered salute in my direction.

I nodded goodbye and walked towards the water; he crushed the butt of his cigarette on my note and walked back into the city lights.

Would you swim down the ocean,
feel yourself lighter?
If the Sun in the other world
shone a little brighter?

Soon, I will see him again in a dark alley, a wobbly frame built of paradoxical concerns and dimly-fitted paragraphs. It is not easy chasing a tale; first dates with stories run quickly out. As I step into the water, still gushing and foaming on the edges, the cigarette-burnt note lands beside me. "It is time to come home," I had written, and he knew the next time I see him would also be the last.

am i a writer?

BY KUSUM CHOUHAN



Am I a writer?
Who wakes up in the morning by
the sound of the birds,
Who stares at the night sky
Then jot down a few words

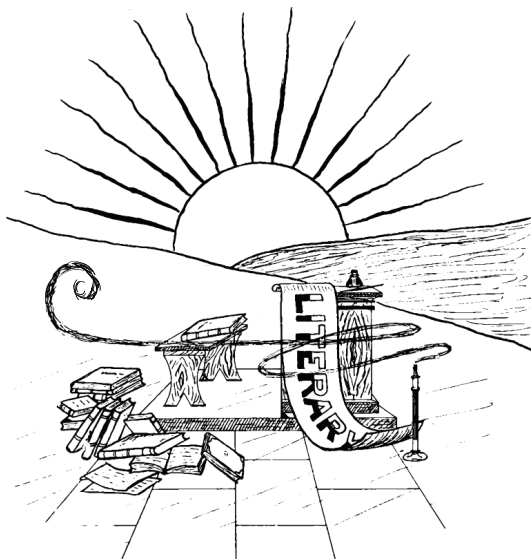
Am I a writer?
Who scribbles and scrawls through
day and night, night and night,
Who locks horns with Déjà vu
And yet fears to take the first flight

Am I a writer?
When in my story a character dies, or
two words accidentally rhyme,
When Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Yeats and their splendour
postulate an exceptional paradigm

Am I a writer?
Who goes on a prolonged vacation of
thoughts but returns empty-handed,
Who whims of stardust, flowers and love
in a village abandoned, and a city deserted

Am I a writer?
A mad poet, perhaps a sad artist
learning to love Aristotle,
An experienced old monk and chartist
with words like engines at full throttle

I think, I am a writer.
 When I play around with
 colossal amounts of words,
 like embourgeoisement, consanguineous, stupendous,
 Quintessential, commonsensical, pulchritudinous,
 Exquisite, captivating, sagacious,
 Astute, insightful, perspicacious,
 Besotted, canoodle, prodigious,
 But same is the meaning of proud as orgulous



Can I be a writer?
 If I write unadorned pieces
 of modest, honest and unpretentious feelings,
 If I only write what heart ceases
 and my grey matter has no competitive dealings

NOW, AM I A WRITER?

meet the authors

Deeya Manocha

Deeya Manocha completed her post graduation in English from the University of Delhi. With a passion for creative writing, she reflects on life, human experiences and self-discovery across genres, seeking to connect with deeper realities and inspire meaningful engagement.

Harsh Srivastav

Harsh has completed his master's course in English Literature from Banaras Hindu University. Poetry and Nostalgia for him are, more than any complex aesthetic & psychological phenomena, the "Anywhere Doors" which open to the vibrant mess of biotic imaginations and unsettling chronotopes of simpler times. So, more than a creative endeavour, writing for him is a cosy refuge from the heavy rain drops of reality.

Nandita

Nandita completed her Master's degree in English Literature from University of Delhi. Her internship took her to Spain where she worked as a Language and Culture Assistant for the Spanish Ministry of Education. Currently, she is working as a creative writer and English language analyst.

Pallavi Yadav

Pallavi Yadav is currently working as an intern doctor at SSH, Banaras Hindu University. This fictional story is going to be her published work and for her it's a dream come true. Her only wish is to be a doctor with a deep understanding of as much dimensions as possible in order to help her patients.

Harshit Singh

The author is all about a couple of observations and stimulations. He finds an untamed pleasure sinking in to the sea bed of raw emotions, coming up with the solidified rocks/pieces of texts.

Kusum Chouhan

A budding poet and bibliophile, Kusum Chouhan hails from Delhi. She has completed her M.A. in English from Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi (2024). Despite her devotion to her educational field, she is equally passionate about writing in Hindi. Her short story 'The Change of Season' won first prize in Inter-Zone Writing Competition held by the Bengal Association in New Delhi (2018). She lives by her name which literally translates as 'flower', and *"flowers always seek to spread happiness and absorb pain"*, writes Kusum.





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