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Holidays



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FROM THE DESK OF GROUP EDITOR

*The holiest of all holidays are those
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart*

– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Holidays are a state of mind, a feeling, an act of remembrance and self-discovery. It necessarily doesn't have to be going somewhere different and having fun. Sometimes, holidays are all about inner peace.

You don't have to travel far and wide to find wonder and beauty. As the famous travel writer Pico Iyer said: "We travel, initially, to lose ourselves; and we travel, next to find ourselves... we travel, in essence, to become young fools again - to slow time down and get taken in, and fall in love once more."

Holidays are all about refreshing our minds and giving us relief. Oxford dictionary describes holiday as a day of rest from work. But holidays are not merely days of rest. They are actually a change from the routine.

Every now and then our mind longs for leisure. It is the holidays that give us time to take care of our health and spirit. We also yearn for change and variety in life to replace those drab and wearisome feelings with zest and zeal. And that's what holidays provide.

Holidays remind us of home, rejuvenation, celebration, memories, and healing. Turn the pages to celebrate and cherish those experiences and find peace and satisfaction in this fast-paced world, where stillness is a luxury.

Happy Reading!

Affan Yesvi
Affan Yesvi



FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S DESK



DR. SONIKA SETHI
.....

'Holidays'- the word has a magical charm to it, a special ding that regales you no end and a character that rejuvenates your tired bones and limbs with its mere presence.

Who doesn't long for holidays and who doesn't want a vacation? We all have our chosen destinations and aims- endless fun at the Grandma's house, lounging by the beach, hiking in the mountains, camping by the riverside, trekking with chums, slumber parties with the gal group or biking excursions with the guys. Whatever the reason and whatever the place, holidays are fun!

Age tends to ensnare us in the web of responsibilities, liabilities and accountabilities and leaves us little time to catch up on our inner selves. In the midst of this hum-drum existence, when we manage to smuggle a few days, the precious moments not only provide us an impetus to tackle the harsh days ahead but also spin for us a cocoon of life-long memories, that we cherish and where we seek comfort from time to time. Vacations are oasis in the hot sands of time. As G. K. Chesterton said, '*Hoilday is a restoring thing, which by a blast of magic turns man into himself.*'

With summer vacations just around the corner, we bring to our readers some vibrant and cheerful; some poignant and thoughtful accounts of holidays from our contributors. Hope you enjoy reading them. We wish our readers

Happy Reading! Happy Writing! Happy Holidays!!!

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Mango Blossoms

*This spring I did not bemoan
the Paradise lost
I awaited mango blossoms
I tasted many times
the delicious juice
that summer would bring
I empathized with conquerors
who came to search for
this fruit in a distant land
Ideally it should have been
the forbidden fruit of paradise
that Eve gave to Adam
This spring I passed
mango groves that scent
the spring air and I did yearn
for the trees lost
forever to the city
I thought of a mango grove
near Samrala town
where I went once
looking for a poet
called Lal Singh 'Dil'
This spring I liberated
my dead and
celebrated the living
This spring I awaited
mango blossoms and
Paradise was regained*



NIRUPAMA DUTT

is a renowned poet, columnist, writer and translator of many seasons with several books to her credit. She hails from Chandigarh.





A Coastal Odyssey

*Beneath the sun-kissed sky of Dapoli's coast,
Lies a world where nature's beauty is engrossed,
Virgin beaches untouched by human hands,
Where the sea and sand unite and dance.
The silence of these shores, so peaceful and serene,
Is broken by the ocean's roar, with waves so pristine,
The sleepy fishing villages, with their salty smell,
Like a story told by the sea, they weave a tale,
The cool evening breeze, like a gentle kiss,
Brings respite from the heat, a moment of bliss,
The heart feels free like the vast open sea,
All worries and woes wash away with each wave's spree,
Energy renewed, a much-needed break,
As the sun sets on this paradise by the bay.
And as the tiny monsoon clouds form overhead,
The beauty of this place lingers on in my head,
A treasure trove of memories, forever to keep,
Dapoli's pristine beaches, a world so unique.*



MEERA BHANSALI

is an author based in Mumbai. She is the poet of the dark poetry book – Speck and Editor of 'Letters to the Dark' anthology. She goes by the pen name "theworkingofthesoul"

A Holiday to Remember

Sometimes, rather often, we take our life for granted, forget the blessings we have been bestowed with, forget the people who embellish our life with their seamless presence, hardly notice them as they become a part and parcel of our life.

It was a regular holiday to the seaside town that I have been visiting for years. There were no apprehensions or anticipations as this place was not expected to throw any surprises at me. It was a confidence obtained through familiarity.

I was walking down the cemented embankment which had been erected to arrest erosion. I wanted to go further—as near as possible to the sea and bathe myself in the saline water. I wanted to immerse myself in the joy and excitement of having earned a holiday after a long and stressful time at work. I was walking on a much-trodden path and then it happened- the Fall.

I fell like a tree sawed down, slipping and falling sideways with a thud. The impact was nothing like what I had ever experienced in my life. My heart leapt and hit against the rib cage, my head was mercilessly battered by the cement and the embedded stone chips. It took me good five minutes to absorb the shock, collect myself and get up. The accident was the dark cloud but my writing is about the silver linings—the profound realization and my sense of gratitude.

My silver linings presented themselves in several forms- an elderly mother, who hurried down the same slippery pathway,



unmindful of her own safety, to check on a daughter who had fallen. A son who suddenly grew up to assume the role of a guardian, admonishing his mother for being too adventurous and foolhardy. A spouse who apologized for not being able to comb the hair properly as his better half nursed a fractured arm and was unable to perform even the simplest of tasks. Friends who called up in panic to enquire how bad the damage was and advice poured in from various quarters in response to the voice messages sent by me.

Each one trying to help in the best possible way, each one having my best interest in mind— advising the best course of action, even suggesting which physician to visit, sharing the contact details so that some medical help could be obtained over the phone. Some indifferent friends also arrived as life lessons— people who never had the time to check on an injured, indisposed friend but that is how life is supposed to be. The adversities help in separating the chaff from the grain and help us realize what is worth keeping and what one should let go. Sometimes simple reminders followed by profound realizations redefine the trajectory of life.



SARBANI CHAKRAVARTI

is a trained teacher with international teaching experience and is currently working as a senior teacher in Kolkata.



Holiday Palette

*Let me take the azure hues from the sea,
And olive green of mountains and trees.
Let me paint you a pleasing holiday palette,
Earth's refreshing colours in a Cosmic ballet.*

*The lime green sheen of leaves in spring born.
The muddy earth after monsoon rains so brown.
Winding roads and cobblestones in shades of grey.
And snowy white peaks over which skiers sashay.*

*Bustling markets, colours waltz in symphony.
Aromas entice and blend in perfect harmony.
Exploring exotic sights and culinary treasures.
Adventure in a rendezvous of various cultures.*

*Let's go over the horizon where new destinations lay.
Let's merge with nature and go on a long holiday.
Where there's no work only peace and relaxation.
Nature's tapestry unfolds its wonderful creations.*

*Let our minds be free and absorb those wonders,
Souls delight as far from native lands we wander.
Escape the daily grind, sweat and toil of days.
Holidays are here, signals the merry month of May.*



DR. DEVIYANI SINGH

has a PhD in International Terrorism. She taught in Delhi University and worked with the Lok Sabha Secretariat as Executive Officer in the Committee on External Affairs. She is presently the Editor of an Education magazine.

The Last Ticket

As the car's wheels rolled into the huge and welcoming gates of Amritsar on a February day quite warm for that time of the year, a strong and mighty sense of recognition surged within me. Even though I had been there a decade ago at a very tender age, the city and its various sights seemed to bear familiarity within my memory.

It was after a decade that I was bestowed with an opportunity to visit the beautiful city. It happened to be a long weekend and it was nothing short of a miracle that my proposal of visiting Amritsar was unanimously accepted by my family members.

I had ample time to see the city and spent the first half of the day visiting well-known landmarks. However, I found myself dried up when it came to more places to visit in the latter part of the day. Google, as always, was the answer to my perennial problems and queries. I have been a firm believer in the fact that a visit cannot be proclaimed to be complete and a place cannot be ticked off the bucket-list, unless one has seen the lesser-known places.



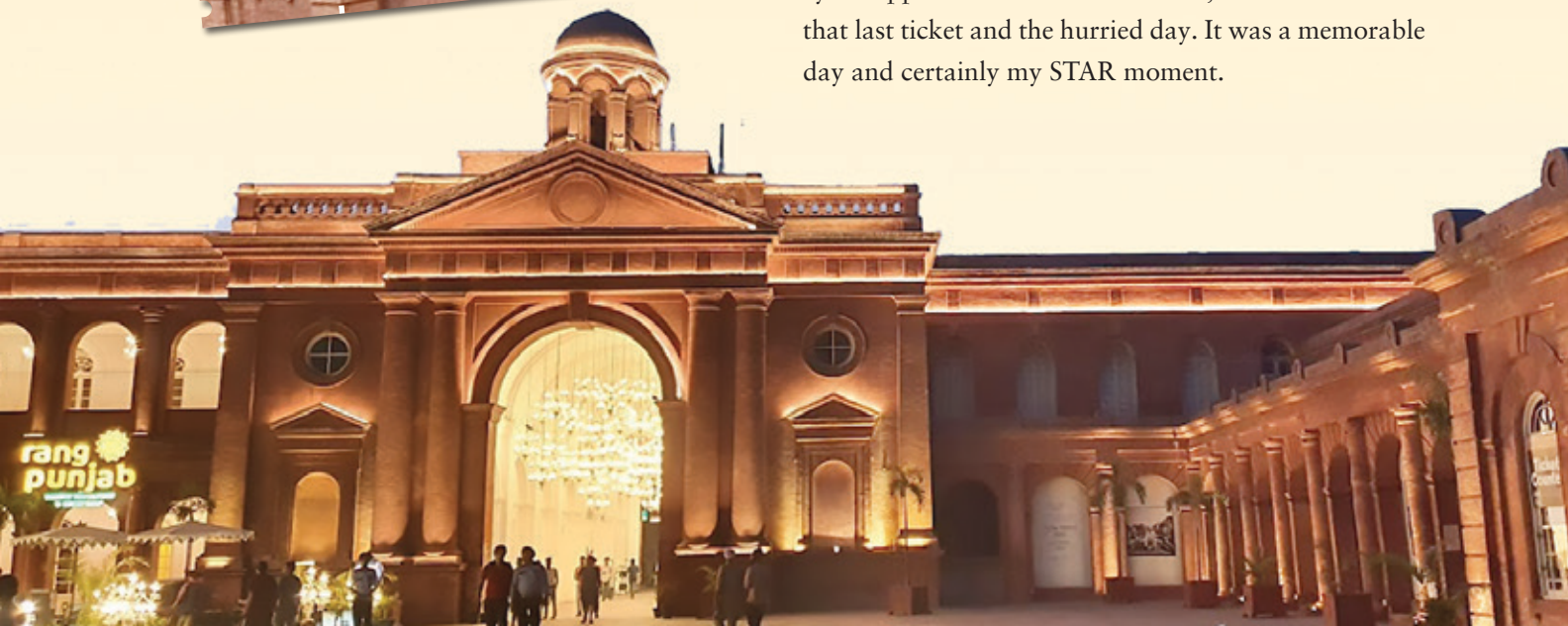
SAIKRIT GULATI

is a student of Class 9 of St. John's High School, Chandigarh.

This belief has often led me to off-beat destinations, nestled within bustling and sprawling tourist hubs, including the Tughlakabad and Hauz Khas Forts of Delhi and the Takht-i-Akbari in Punjab's Gurdaspur at Kalanaur. In Amritsar, this resulted in my visit to the city's Partition Museum- a representation of India's huge rainbow moment when jubilations came blended with Partition Blues. The current building is much more than rocks and sand- it reflects the feelings of the people separated by Partition.

It was almost closing time, according to my ubiquitous travel companion- Google Maps and I had no alternative but to make haste and rush. After facing spontaneous refusals from multiple auto-rickshaw wallahs, I found one willing driver who navigated the busy streets of Amritsar to ensure that we made it just in time. Literally running and making my way to the ticket counter, I felt that time, which had been running at the speed of a hare till now had slowed its pace to that of a turtle. Finally, we reached the ticket-counter after what seemed like an eternity, we hastily made payments and got the golden card for the entry. As we turned to go, I heard the click of the shutter and instinctively knew that what my hands held was certainly the last ticket issued for the day.

Today, almost two months later, I am still the possessor of that fateful day's last ticket. Whenever my eyes happen to see a ticket counter, I am reminded of that last ticket and the hurried day. It was a memorable day and certainly my STAR moment.





May you live in such a way that others will say-
“She is a woman who, though ordinary somehow stands out and has a beautiful story to tell.”

- *Daisaku Ikeda*

**HARD
WORK
NEVER
GOES
UNNOTICED**

Uma Dogra is an exponent of Kathak and a Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee. She is a Kathak soloist, a choreographer and a teacher, and has been performing in India and abroad for more than 50 years.

In conversation with our Features Editor Preeti S. Manaktala

What made you choose Kathak?

My first love was the sitar, but my father had a busy schedule and could not devote much time to teach me.

When I was 6, I started learning Kathak under Guru Bansi Lal from the Jaipur Gharana, and thereon from Srimati Reba Vidyarthi at The Kathak Kendra, New Delhi. Because of the dedication of my mother who never let me miss my dance classes, Kathak became my passion.

I run ‘Uma Dogra’s School of Kathak’ in Mumbai. Our activities include classroom teaching, workshops, master classes, performances, seminars and festivals.

What is your special memory from your first performance?

My first performance was at NDMC hall near

Jantar Mantar, Delhi. My grandmother came to watch this show and was so happy that she gave me a 1 rupee note, which I still treasure.

Please tell us about the inception of the Samved Society for performing arts and its vision.

On January 31, 1990, my Guru Pt. Durga Lal ji passed away. I was only 32 then and his death shocked me. I took a vow that I will keep his name and love for kathak alive. Samved was born to keep the legacy of my Guru alive.

How and why did the Raindrops Festival of Indian Classical Dance start?

We started it in Mumbai in 1991 to encourage young dancers and talented artists who don’t get the opportunity to perform. I can proudly say



that as many as 450 artists have performed at this festival and many are now seasoned dancers.

You have been honoured with the title “Pandita”. Please tell us how you regard this title?

This title keeps reminding me about my future responsibilities as an artist and towards my society. There is a strong desire within me to take this art forward to the next generation. These awards are important and I proudly share these awards with my students and families. My message is that if I can rise and shine coming from a humble middleclass back ground, anyone can touch the sky through perseverance and determination. Hard work never goes unnoticed.

What’s your fun fact that the world doesn’t know?

I am an animal lover. I take care of many dogs and cats at a shelter home where I regularly donate. Also, I like to write poetry.

I have written a book titled In Praise Of Kathak about my journey as a kathak dancer and the techniques of Kathak.

Please tell us more about Pandit Durga Lal Festival of Indian classical dance and music.

The festival was started by me in 1991 as part of the Samved Society. Over three decades, this festival has seen luminaries from the field



AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar by Govt. of India, 2014
- Maharashtra Sanskriti State Award, Govt. of Maharashtra, 2009
- Honorary membership of Min-on Concert Association Japan, for spreading Peace and culture through Dance, 2008
- Devadasi National Award Bhubaneswar, Orissa, 2015
- Honorary Doctorate from ITM University, Raipur, 2015
- Chairperson, Kathak Kendra Advisory Committee, New Delhi





of Indian classical vocal, instrumental and dance grace its stage and pay tribute to the Kathak legend.

What makes you encourage the youth in all your endeavours?

My mentor Daisaku Ikeda believed that the future of any country depends on what youth can achieve. It is important to keep the youth meaningfully engaged and take forward the culture, traditions, dances and music of India.

How do you see the future of Indian classical dance?

I find our youth deeply connected with art and culture. I firmly believe that if we channelize the youth in the right direction, the future is in safe hands.

Share some light on Nichiren Buddhism practice that you follow.

I have been practicing Nichiren Buddhism for 19 years. This practice is all about cause and effect. Buddhism views life as not limited to the present existence but as a continuum extending from past lives to the present and on to future lives.

Actions made in past existences form causes. They appear as effects or results in the present existence. Actions taken in the present create



causes that will bring about effects in future existences.

Nichiren Buddhism enables people to transform their lives at the deepest level, break through the limitations of karma, or destiny, and open a way forward. It is a teaching for changing one's karma for the better and securing a truly happy state of life today that will endure long into the future.

This practice gives you hope that if you are on the right path, nothing is impossible.

The Lost Symphony



It was with such difficulty that a long overdue holiday was planned. The three siblings were in distant places, different professions and positions now. In their varied journeys and uneven situations of life their love for each other had not turned tepid. Kamini was sixty, Meghna fifty eight and their brother Shalin was fifty four. Their childhood memories were what had held them together. Perhaps it was also that the best time of their lives had been cut short by the untimely death of their father and the tragedy had kept them huddled together in their minds even after so many years.

This getaway was like a reunion, an opportunity for the three of them to recreate fond memories in action again. They were reared on music, art and aesthetics of life, the sweet memories of which had remained as a bliss in the humdrum of their respective lives.

The singing sessions- songs of K.L. Sehgal, Talat Mehmood, Noor Jahan, Begum Akhtar, Sudha Malhotra, Dilraj Kaur, Habib Wali Muhammad, Mehdi Hassan, Runa Laila kept ringing in their ears. The holiday would give them an opportunity to retrieve the long forgotten music and symphonies.

Meghna looked forward to the holiday. With gay abundance and umpteen laughter, the siblings would revive what was snatched away by time. Kamini, though on a peritoneal dialysis since eighteen years, was also excited for this reunion. Though her health had been showing signs of deterioration, she was happy that she would manage with the family's support.

Meghna booked an affordable and lovely place in an artist colony in Himachal Pradesh in Kangra District with Dhauladhar range as the backdrop. She had been to this place with her son a few days ago but had wanted to visit the place with her siblings. She knew that in such offbeat places, magic could be created in the company of her sister and brother. As the day of the trip was approaching, Meghna was having sleepless nights out of excitement. Shalin had the knack of exploring such places but he had fallen on bad days. Meghna was happy that she had managed this holiday for him and his family with least financial burden on him.

Kamini, who was having difficulty with such ventures due to a dysfunctional kidney, had consented to join willingly. It was a dream holiday. After ages, they would be together at last.

Two days before their dream trip, Shalin breathed his last owing to a massive heart attack and the holiday remained a dream.

Today, on Mother's Day, when Kamini and Meghna's mother has been joined by Shalin, Meghna is murmuring this stray line in a pensive mood...

Tum hote toh aisa hota



DR. SANGEETA HANDA

retired as Principal, Govt Mohindra College, Patiala.

36 years of experience as Professor of English.

Received International Education Award in Texas, USA in 2000. Author of 2 books and several articles in national and international journals.

Summer Tales

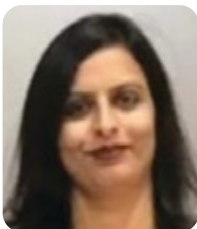
*When the scorching summer sun
begins to cast its fiercest rays
It's time for holidays,
Whimsical and magical happy days.*

*A plan to visit grand ma's house
brimming with joy everyone's face*

*Our loving abode for summer vacation
With bamboo chiks unfurled, under slow whirring fans
Sepia tinted images or reminiscence look,
lost in the argosy of old book
Enjoying carrom and scrabble through endless conversations
A mélange of excitement and emotions*

*Aroma of barbecue floats in breeze
The heat wraps us in lazy haze
Waking at eleven seems like heaven
Drowsy noon, siesta, honeyed indolence
Long evening walks, mid-morning slumber
Not worried about any day on calendar.*

*Conjuring million emotions by her inexplicable comforting ways
Always taking behind the memories of idyllic days.*



**DR. RASHMI
CHOWDHARY**

is a Dentist by profession
and writes short stories
and poems.



A Pit Stop

*A Holiday is not a place,
It's a time;
Time to rejoice, have fun;
Time to relax and sprout creativity
Holidays are like swift breeze
Of a cool morning
Or the pleasant sunset of a warm evening
Holidays feel like
The giggles of your family
Or the prickles of grass while you pass by
Even more, holidays pass
By the blink of an eye
So, you just have to enjoy them
And gaze at the sky.*



GAYATRI PRABHOO

is 10 year old and lives in Mumbai.
Her favourite pastime is writing
poems, short stories and painting.
She wants to travel the world and
aspires to become a natural historian.



A Swapping of Shovels

‘What a great way to spend Holidays!’ thought Rahul as he sat forlornly eating his breakfast in his new house, in an entirely new town, away from all his friends.

Rahul was still annoyed by his parents’ decision to shift to a new city during summer vacations. Moreover, his parents were too busy to plan any vacation this summer.

Rahul went outside. He had seen a park nearby. He decided to go there and make new friends. Then decided against it and instead started kicking away stones in the untamed garden.

He kicked a stone a little too hard and it sailed over the neighbour’s hedge and then came a shattering noise. Rahul rushed over the hedge. A flowerpot lay broken on the ground.

Dread filled his stomach as he looked at the broken pieces. He had never had any complaints from his previous neighbours but this surely won’t make a good impression.

He was still deep in thought when a voice spoke up, “So, why are you not running away?”

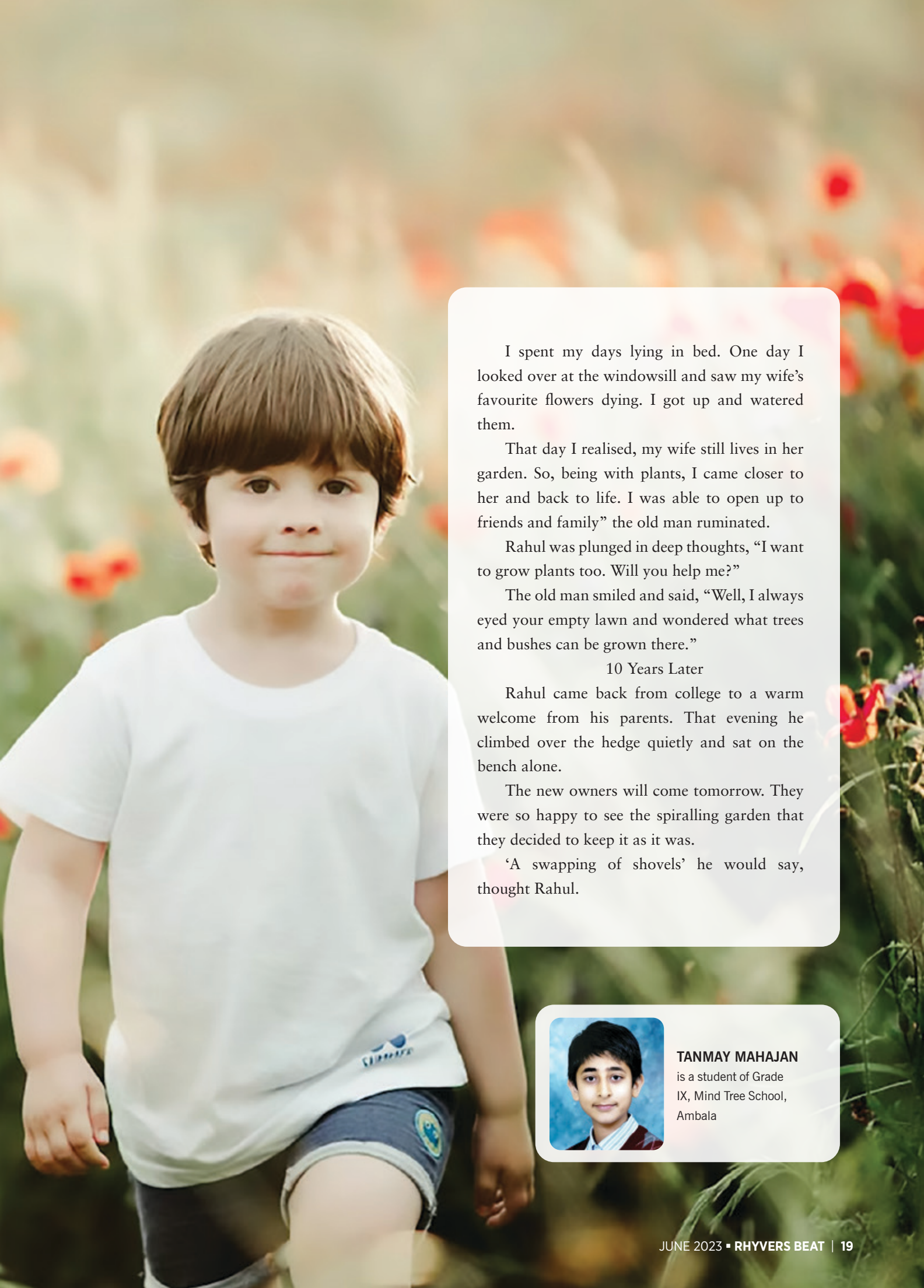
The speaker was an old man with tufts of silver hair at the sides of his head and a sparkly moon in the centre. His eyes twinkled with mischief as he forced his face to give a stern look.

“I would not run away. I am sorry for the pot” Rahul said apologetically. The old man’s eyes saddened as he spoke, “Be sorry for the plant and not the pot. The pot is just a vessel. The plant was its spirit.”

Rahul had never thought this way. The old man then spoke cheerily, “Well son, do you want me to keep shouting across the hedge or would you come over?”

Rahul went and sat next to the old man who started to point out at the various plants growing in the garden. Finally, the boy felt comfortable enough to share his own set of woes with the old man.

“Everyone’s lonely at times. When I lost my wife last year, I thought I would never be able to live again. All hope had seeped out of my life.



I spent my days lying in bed. One day I looked over at the windowsill and saw my wife's favourite flowers dying. I got up and watered them.

That day I realised, my wife still lives in her garden. So, being with plants, I came closer to her and back to life. I was able to open up to friends and family" the old man ruminated.

Rahul was plunged in deep thoughts, "I want to grow plants too. Will you help me?"

The old man smiled and said, "Well, I always eyed your empty lawn and wondered what trees and bushes can be grown there."

10 Years Later

Rahul came back from college to a warm welcome from his parents. That evening he climbed over the hedge quietly and sat on the bench alone.

The new owners will come tomorrow. They were so happy to see the spiralling garden that they decided to keep it as it was.

'A swapping of shovels' he would say, thought Rahul.



TANMAY MAHAJAN

is a student of Grade IX, Mind Tree School, Ambala

Dawn of Epicure

*Indolence rises from her sleep, unties ennui and ushers felicity,
Takes plunge in meditative sabbatical to forgive events,
That was ever aching inexplicably,
In thy country five senses capture beauty,
and soul absorbs tranquility,
Sagacity, rationality leave thy abode,
Soul soars from tiresome mundanity,
The chain of onus becomes brittle,
Respite encroaches upon bondage of obsequity,
Escapists congregate and congratulate each other,
for the epicurean benediction,
As self, knocks at the door of emancipation,
Exuberance of gentle breeze caresses every pore,
Barrack darns, wounds with peace and relief,
Renews self to pour in the memory lane,
The garnered pleasurable moments of parole,
The zeal to harness joy, time and day,
Becomes sole aim of recreation and exhilarations,
The epicurean drink to counter misery,
You seldom meet like rainbow to satiate humanity.*



RUPINDER KAUR

is a poet and
academician
from Ambala.

Hit Pause

*A holiday, a vacation, oh what joy it brings,
A time for relaxing, forgetting all things.
The hustle and bustle of everyday life,
Put on pause, no stress, no strife.*

*The sun shines down on sandy shores,
Waves crashing gently, nothing more.
Barefoot strolls along the beach,
Restful days within easy reach.*

*Exploring new lands, immersing oneself,
In history, culture, the natural wealth.
A chance to expand horizons, broaden minds,
All at leisure, no schedules to bind.*

*Adventures abound, from mountains to the sea,
Thrills to be sought or serenity.
From skiing down snowy slopes,
To lounging poolside, drinking coladas and hope.*

*Holiday vacation, a chance to connect,
With those we love, no regrets.
Unforgettable moments to be made,
Memories for life, never fade.*

*So let us embrace this time of leisure,
Take full advantage, at our pleasure.
For soon enough, it will all be done,
Back to the daily grind, not as much fun.*



**NISHANT K
SHRIVASTAVA**

is a retired engineer settled in Chandigarh and dabbles in poetry, prose, sketching and much more.



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- Best faculty in the region
- State of the art infrastructure
- Hostel facilities for girls with wi-fi 24 hours Internet Facility
- Hi-tech clinical labs, computer labs and high level real time training to the students
- Clinical training tie-up with top of the best hospitals of India
- Courses duly approved by the relative apex bodies & accepted globally
- Sports adequate facilities available
- Transportation facilities from all corners of Tricity
- Well equipped library with over 4000 books

Why RGI

- Air conditioned campus, well equipped library & Computer Lab, 600 seating capacity auditorium & LCD embedded classrooms.
- Wi-Fi campus (24 hours Internet Facility)
- Programmes affiliated to 'A' Grade University rated by NAAC
- Hostel facilities for girls (24 hours Internet facility) & PG for boys
- 100% placement assured for deserving candidates.



How to reach RGI



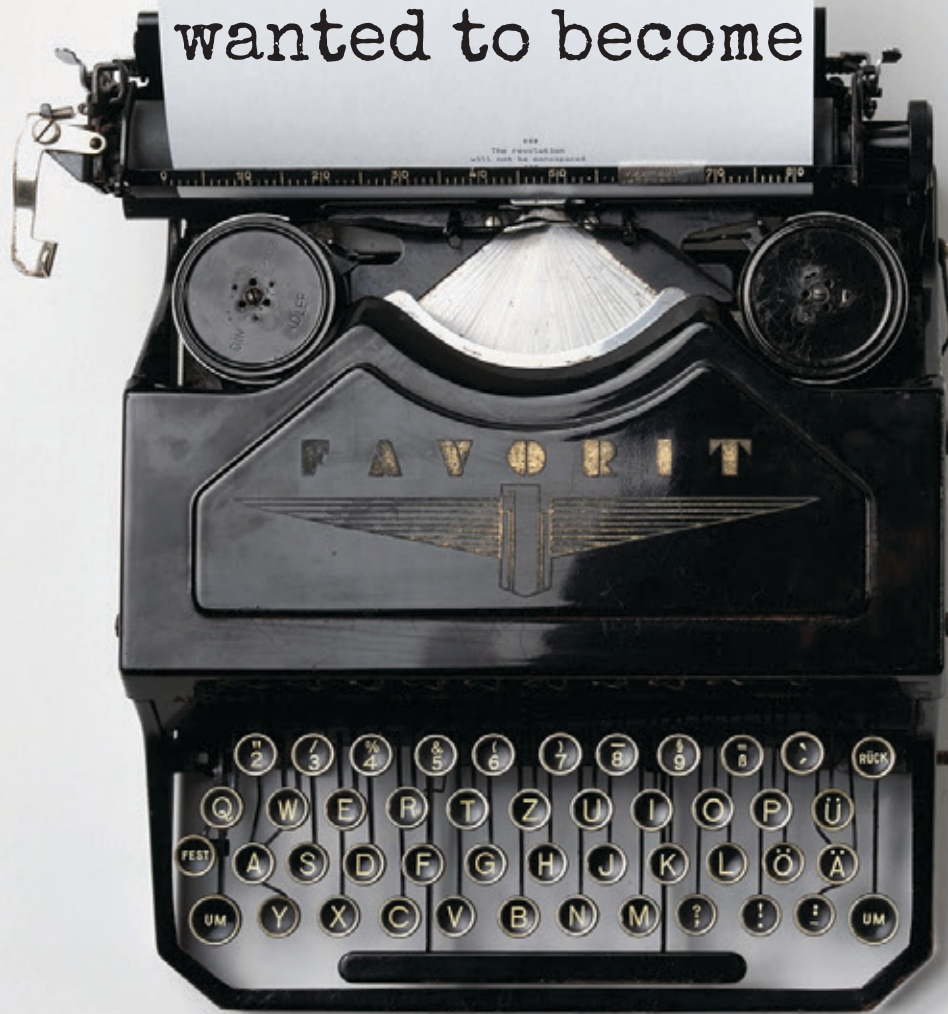
As the team sat brainstorming to hunt for a suitable title, we discussed among ourselves, 'Art, Literature and Culture must flow effortlessly and unhindered by borders and boundaries of any sort. Only two things flow unbridled- Air and Water. Rivers, we decided, flow with the gushing energy across all constraints. So, Rivers it was.

However, the team decided to play a little with the spellings and instead of the 'I' in Rivers, we replaced it with the 'H' and the 'Y' representing the traditional name of the country 'Hindustan' and the 'Young India'. Thus emerged the name of our publishing house, **RHYVERS** - *an amalgamation of tradition and youthful modernity.*



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