



Progressive Education Society's
Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce
Ganeshkhind, Pune-16
Department of English

ODYSSEY

Vol. 6

*You are more
beautiful because
you have been
broken*

Kintsugi

*The art of finding
beauty in imperfections*



Vision

The Department of English envisions youth with a love for literature, desiring to explore the world of aesthetic pleasure, kindle their spirit to understand the science of language, improve their power of expression and linguistic competency leading to successful careers in diverse fields.

Mission

Our mission is to inspire, motivate and encourage students to excel in their academics, be good communicators, foster employability skills in them by providing a platform to identify and nurture their inherent talent, promote their creative pursuits, build their self-esteem and make them well-rounded personalities.

Objectives

- To create awareness about the importance of English as a global language.
- To acquaint students with the catalytic effect of English in opening gateways to myriad career opportunities.
- To make students comprehend analyze and appreciate literary texts.
- To enhance their personality, build their confidence through training in English communication viz. social etiquette, manners, polite conversations, and formal and informal discourse, etc.

Acknowledgements

We owe immense gratitude to the Chairman of the Business Council of Progressive Education Society, Dr. G. R. Ekbote Sir, Prof Suresh Todkar, Deputy Secretary, Dr. Prakash Dixit, Joint Secretary and all the other members of the Management of Progressive Education Society for extending their consistent support to us in all the initiatives we take.

Secondly, we would like to express our gratitude to the Principal of Modern College Ganeshkhind, Dr. Sanjay Kharat Sir for providing us with this platform every year and being the cornerstone for each of our programs with the same enthusiasm.

We would like to thank all the Vice-principals of our college, Dr. Jyoti Gagangras from the Arts Faculty, Dr. Shubhangi Joshi from the Commerce Faculty, and Prof Swati Kandharkar from the Science Faculty, and Dr. Ravindra Khsirsagar, the Vice Principal Examination for their support and help.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Head, Dr. Shampa Chakravarthy, and all our teachers in the English Department - Dr. Sandeep Sanap, Dr. Deepanita Bhanja, and Mr. Jitender Kumar for their relentless guidance and moral support throughout the making of this magazine.

A big thank you to all the teachers from Modern College, from all faculties and departments for continually showcasing an appreciation for all our activities.

Editorial Committee



Ketaki Thorat
TYBA

"Assume your fate as an artist and bear it, its burden and its greatness, without ever asking after the rewards that may come from outside"
-Rainer Maria Rilke

Vandhya Tyer
TYBA



Shruti Jadhav
SYBA

"Curiouser and curiouser"



"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude!"

- Maya Angelou



Roma Chiplunkar
SYBA

"Change is the biggest constant in life."

Kaurobi Paul
SYBA

"You can't live your life for other people. You've got to do what's right for you, even if it hurts some people you love."

- Nicholas Sparks, The Notebook



Advisory Committee



Dr. Shampa Chakravarthy
(Associate Professor and HoD, English)

"There is nothing more rare, nor more beautiful, than a woman being unapologetically herself; comfortable in her perfect imperfection. To me, that is the true essence of beauty." – Dr. Steve Maraboli

Dr. Sandeep Sanap
(Associate Professor, English)

Any moment might be our last. Everything is more beautiful because we're doomed. You will never be lovelier than you are now. We will never be here again. -Homer



Dr. Deepanita Bhanja
(Assistant professor, English)

"Understanding beauty is a journey towards self discovery and self acceptance." – Herself



Mr Jitender Kumar
(Assistant Professor, English)

"Have no fear of perfection, you'll never reach it." – Salvador Dali



Quality over Perfection



A Candid Conversation
with Principal
Dr. Sanjay S. Kharat

Q1) How do you interpret imperfections, inner beauty, and outer beauty?

First of all, I would like to say that I am extremely happy since you students are contributing enthusiastically to Odyssey. This is a great exercise for 'experiential learning' that you have come up with. The subject that you have chosen this year is really very good. As far as the answer to your question, I believe that all these terms are relative, they differ from individual to individual. We cannot say that someone is not perfect, every person is perfect in his own way. It is not expected that everyone should be perfect in every aspect. We should identify the perfect qualities of an individual rather than focusing on their imperfections or weaknesses. I believe that inner beauty is based on one's mindset and thinking process in life- how he analyses situations and overcomes them gracefully. Everybody has different views, so you may come across people who do not have a similar outlook on life as you, but being different or unique does not invalidate their inner beauty. In contrast to this, there is a mathematical formula that determines your external beauty based on your physical features in terms of outer beauty. However, I believe that outer beauty depends on one's perception at a point in time. Once you accept yourself and explore the beauty in different dimensions, you can find beauty everywhere. Understanding the object or person in concern holistically is imperative to appreciate one's beauty. If we fail to consider one's inner beauty, outer beauty is of no use, since it is ephemeral.

Q2) Since you are a professor of Zoology, which animal or bird do you find the most beautiful and why?

When I was a student of TY B.Sc., I used to attend lectures of botany as it used to be my favorite subject. A great amount of beauty can be found in botany; hence I chose botany as my specialization. However, one of my teachers persuaded me to attend lectures on Zoology. Zoology is a diverse field. It not only involves study of animals and birds, but also to their behavior, ecology, internal anatomy of the animals as well as the psychological and physiological changes that takes place in them, which is reflected in the form of their behavior. It explores the social interactions between organisms, thus helping us understand them in a holistic way. It is a subject that can be learnt by visiting forest, grasslands, water bodies and such habitats, which helps us understand how many habitats exists and how each habitat is different from the other. We get to see animals and birds and understand their feeding behavior as well as the ecology, the existence of food chain and food web.

As far as your question is concerned, every organism is a beautiful creation of Nature. In 2005, we started a course in basics of Ornithology. It involves people seeing birds by using binoculars and clicking their photographs. However, it is important for people to know how to properly observe the birds; factors such as the light and location affects the way in which the birds are seen. Birds do not strike poses for us; hence, we must adjust with the change in the environment. A bird which I admire is the Sunbird. It is a small creature, with a very long, curved beak. The bird feeds on the nectar of a flower. The Sunbird inserts its beak into the Corolla of the flower to suck the nectar. The beauty can be seen in the fact that while the bird is sucking the nectar, it must keep batting its wings. However, Mother Nature is not always kind. Some flowers have pseudo nectar for cross fertilization. Therefore, in a field of 100 flowers, only 10 to 12 flowers will have nectars, while others will not. Therefore, the bird must check every flower for nectar. In this process, the stamens get stuck to their body which causes pollination.

The lesson that can be learnt from this is that Nature teaches us to keep helping others. This is the beauty of a teacher as well; a good teacher will always think about the benefits of the students.

Q3) Do you think the journey of self-acceptance is important? What measures you suggest to propagate the significance of accepting one's flaws?

I think the journey of self-acceptance is a long road. Most of the time, people fail to truly accept themselves because they indulge in comparing themselves with others. Hence, it is challenging. But, if you try to find out your strengths and focus on them, this journey becomes easier. Once you accept yourself, you can understand what you are capable of and what you can achieve. Unfortunately, our friends, family and colleagues seem to focus on our weaknesses. Whether or not, people around you compliment you or encourage you, you need to have the vigour to embark on a journey of self-realization, all on your own. This will automatically lead to accepting yourself. Even today, I compare myself when I stand in front of the mirror. But, then I realized that I cannot change my physical parameters or my genetics. One day, I realized that I cannot blame myself or anyone else, for that matter. These thoughts were futile. I decided to explore my inner strengths in my maximum capacity to get an excellent outcome. The moment you start to get the outcome you want, you realize how strong you are. It requires a lot of time to reach this stage. But, in my experience when you start to shoulder responsibilities, you understand how far you can go. Have faith in yourself and fulfil your responsibilities. Test your limits and strengths to gain an understanding of your abilities. In spite of this, there are many youngsters who feel they are useless- '*main kuch kaam ka nahi hoon.*' But that is not true. Everyone has their own destiny, their own purpose, you just need to search for it. And once you find it, you will begin to accept yourself, "तुझे आहे तुजपाशी परी तू जागा चुकलासी"

Q4) Sometimes, our strengths can be disguised as our weaknesses. How do you think everyone should tackle that?

Now this happens many a times; with everyone at any stage of their lives. When the expectations in reference to our strength are not achieved, then it gets disguised as our weakness. It is always not necessary to get a positive result, as failure is the beginning of success. I would like to share with you the stories of two people, whose journey to success began with failure.

I had once interviewed a girl, who told me that she took nine years to complete her CA., Look at her determination; she did not give up and relentlessly worked hard. Her strength was her perseverance which bore the results. A businessperson, faced many failures, such as being fired while working at a petrol pump, getting involved in unethical work of preparing and selling wine to facing disappointment in agriculture. He was frustrated with the way things were turning for him. Until he came across books that made him realize that his area had certain plants of great, ayurvedic value. He studied them carefully and began to manufacture ayurvedic products. Today, he is well-established entrepreneur. From his story, we can learn the lesson that our strength or goodness will remain the same, if we are trying to improve ourselves at every stage of our life. Otherwise, we will not be taken seriously by others. The beauty lies in improving oneself at every step of their way.

Q5) Often people are caught up in a toxic race of attaining perfection at the cost of their physical and mental health. Do you think this is correct? What advice would you give to the people who find it difficult to strike a balance between attaining perfection and keeping a check on their health?

To be honest, nobody is perfect. And this is exactly why people strive to become perfect, to give in to the allure of being flawless. When one strives hard to become perfect, they strive to imbibe good qualities in them, such as being dedicated, hard-working, kind-hearted, etc.

The by-product of seeking perfection is acquiring these characteristics which indirectly makes other people perceive us as being perfect. So, I believe that instead of striving for perfection, work hard to be a good person, a good student, a good citizen. Automatically, you become the best in each aspect of life. Basically, in each individual's life, each person must aim to have three qualities i.e., "quality initiative", "quality sustenance", "quality enhancement." All of these are relevant and related to your personal life, professional life, academic life and also social life. If you try to practice these three attributes in your every-day life, you will forget to seek for the "so-called" perfection.

Q6) What are your views on the activities of the Department of English?

The Department of English has taken a leap. They have been able to reach out to the students of all faculties, whether it is Science, Arts or Commerce. I must say, Dr. Shampa Chakravarthy is an exceptionally good teacher. Also, the activities that are being conducted by the Department are good. During 2014-15, our college did not offer specialization in English. At the same time, along with the local students, the students from the North East began to show keen interest in securing admission in our college. Since we were offering specializations in Sociology, Economics, History, an initiative was taken to offer specialization programs in Psychology and English as well. Initially, we did not receive much response for the English Department. However, as the Department began excelling in various areas, through their activities, the number of students increased. I am happy with the activities that are being conducted. These activities are student-centric in nature, which helps the students to acquire skills such as team-building capacity, personality development, how to write and conduct interviews, etc. So, indirectly the students are being provided with all the assets which will be required in the future. These innovative ideas are being put into action with such great enthusiasm, resulting in the achievement of excellence. I wish all the best to the English Department and congratulations to all of you.

Vice Principals' Testimonials



Dr. Jyoti Gagangras
Head - Department of
Sociology and Vice
Principal - Arts

“We tend to focus on outer beauty more than inner beauty. Now-a-days people wish to attain the stereotypical beauty standards like having fair skin, being skinny, etc. Hence, people resort to plastic surgeries to hide their ‘so-called’ physical imperfections. However, I believe that being gracefully old is just as beautiful as the youthful glow. A positive mindset will lead to happiness. If you take one step in the right direction without any shortcuts, you will automatically attain success and lead life in positivity.”

Dr. Shubhangi Joshi

Vice Principal - Commerce Faculty



“Imperfection is everywhere. Don’t try to be perfect at every moment; it’s not possible. It makes you and the people around you unhappy. You have to accept your imperfections and lacunas, and move forward.”

Mrs Swati Kandharkar

Vice Principal - Science Faculty



“One is a mixture of, both, perfections and imperfections. Those who comment on our flaws, too, have imperfections of their own. If all of us can come to this mutual understanding, we don’t have to hide anymore.”

Teachers' Testimonials



Dr. Madhuri Kulkarni
Associate Professor and Head
- Department Of Chemistry

“I had an accident which caused me to develop a squint and led people to assume that I wasn't very educated or experienced but I had faith and confidence to overcome it all. This topic will surely trigger everyone's mind to explore whatever shortcomings they feel they have and try getting over them.”



Dr. Varsha Joshi
Head - Department of Physics

“External beauty should go hand in hand with inner beauty, we shouldn't change ourselves or bother about the world, and rather keep being beautiful in our minds. Everyone should be taught these values from an early age.”



Dr. Pooja Rana
Asst. Professor - Biochemistry

“Everyone is unique and has imperfections, you can always work on them with some effort. Self-confidence is the only key, which reading helps you build as it consciously or subconsciously always leaves an impact on your mind.”



Dr. Sangeeta Dhamdhere

Director - Knowledge Resource Centre

“Beauty is carved from imperfections. Through the initiative of Kintsugi, I hope that we can root out the misconceptions and taboo surrounding imperfections.”



Dr. Gauri Kopardekar
Asst. Professor -
Political Science

“Ceramic is so delicate it can just break but mending it with gold is a very generous and magnanimous thing where you are not only accepting which is rare but adding something precious thus increasing its value. Imperfections are a basic, very worldly reality, especially in these post pandemic times. Everybody can't be perfect so we have to accept ourselves with the positive and negative, which is easier said than done.”

Dr. Jayashree Kharche
Asst. Professor - Sociology



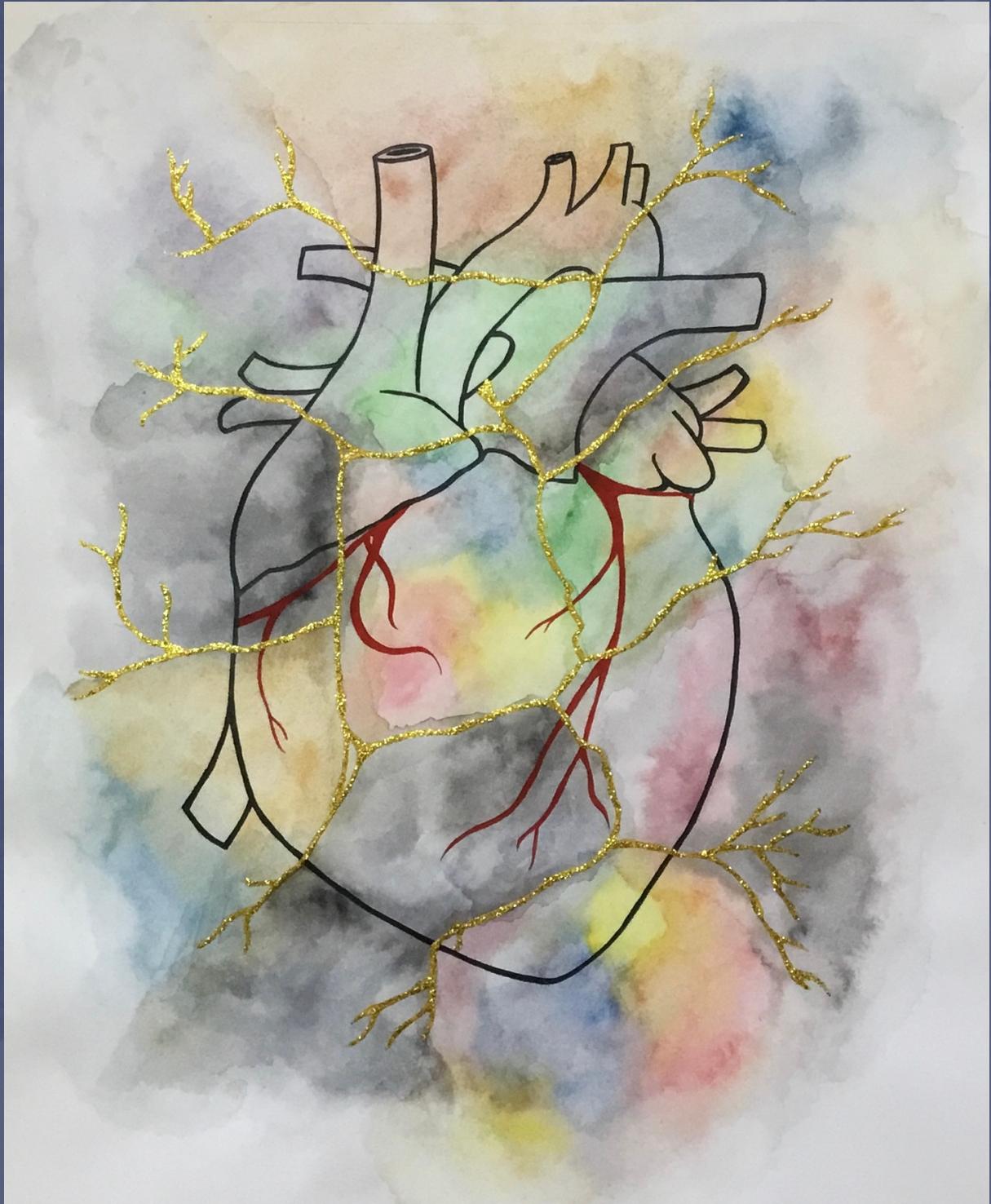
“I believe that finding beauty in imperfections is an individual approach. Having studied sociology, I have observed the fact that the way we define beauty is socially conditioned. According to me, the factors that make a person beautiful are clarity in thoughts, transparency in relationships, how people deal with each other and being yourself, which really define the person's beauty. Beauty is all about accepting imperfections and defining what beauty means to you.”

Index

Sr. No.	Title	Pg. No.
WRITE-UPS & ARTWORK		
1	Artwork with A Perfect Journey of an Imperfect Life - Shruti Jadhav	1 - 2
2	Solitude - Roma Chiplunkar	3 - 4
3	Self Love is Happiness - Tanaya Kulkarni	5 - 6
4	The Beauty in Nature - Vandhya Iyer	7 - 9
5	Body Dysmorphia or Bigorexia - Atharva Sardeshpande	10 - 11
6	The Superwoman of India - Anmol Kamble	12 - 15
7	Making Peace with Imperfections - Neha Kulkarni	16 - 18
8	This is Life - Pratiksha Jore	19 - 22
9	Perfect Beings, Imperfect Shadow - Akanksha Gurjar	23 - 24
10	Perfectly Flawsome - Akshata Chippa	25 - 26
11	Lessons of the Land and Wild - Shamita Patharkar	27 - 29
12	The Crumpled Paper - Raghav Deshpande	30
13	Self Love and Me - Mahira Pathania	31 - 32

Sr. No.	Title	Pg. No.
14	Artwork: The Broken Mug - Vandhya Iyer	33
POETRY & ARTWORK		
15	Life Goes On - Roma Chiplunkar	34
16	I Am Home - Shreeya Panda	35
17	Perfection as a Metaphor - Mahira Pathania	36
18	Artwork - Akshata Chippa	37
19	Crossword	38
20	Crossword Clues	39
21	Word Search	40
22	Movie/Book recommendations	41
23	Crossword Solution	42
24	Word Search Solution	43
25	Hymn to Intellectual Beauty - P.B. Shelley	44
26	Connect With Us	45

Artwork



A Perfect Journey of an Imperfect Life

A piece of artwork like any other, it sat there amidst the other kinds, which overshadowed and adorned it. It oddly stood out amongst its surroundings, because unlike them, it adopted simplicity. Nothing too exaggerated about its structure nor its design and too young to be considered of great antiquity. It was left unbothered; till it experienced the first blow, right at the cœur. It didn't break, of course not; that's not how it was moulded, but the cracks were initiated. With every consecutive strike, the cracks grew and at one point it just shattered, every single piece labeled with a flaw. Cast out and stripped off of every last hope, until... with the lacquer of trust and a sprinkle of love and care as pure as gold; preserving its identity, its blood, its true self, it was mended.

The consciousness and acceptance of imperfections are what gives birth to perfection.

- *Shruti Jadhav*
(SYBA; English Special)

Solitude

Solitude is often confused with loneliness by many people. They are on the same plane as being alone but the latter is a compulsion, while the former is a choice. Solitude is synonymous with silence, peace, and freedom. Solitude is the freedom from societal pressure; it is the freedom from its constraints and its obligations.

Solitude is a tranquil numbing, peaceful calm, and serene silence. All this makes it sound too quiet a realm of existence, but no one can forget the gushing stream of thoughts that runs down the hills of “Sense and Sensibility.” The phrase “calm before the storm” comes to mind when this stream threatens to shatter the tranquility. Meditation is said to help prevent this from happening as well as to discipline you as it forces you to control your thoughts to achieve true solitude.

In today's world, only a few dare to or rather manage to achieve that level of calmness. The others are too distracted by making the mundane, important, and the actual important, trivial. The irony of it all is the fact that they do what they do for their family, which they do not have time for, and they spend time doing what they do alone, despite being surrounded by so many people. That is loneliness; the path that feels like a responsibility for the young who work and dread for the old who have lost the chance of changing or making different choices for their life. The younger generation does not realise it while the older regret it.

Solitude is many things, but that. It is not going away from the people you love or who love you, but rather little pockets of time, in which you are left alone with your thoughts which you then come back from. Many of them have tried to dive into the depths of the meaning of life in their solitude. Many have come with interpretations of their own and the others who believed in one or another.

There may or may not be an exact meaning or purpose to life but there are some certainties that do exist.

'Change is the biggest constant in life' and 'Everything happens for a reason' are two facts I have come to believe and accept in my solitude. The other lessons that you learn from solitude are that you get to understand yourself; you learn your own needs and the importance of being satisfied. You need self-care, self-respect, self-importance, self-discovery, self-growth and so much more to love yourself. "Yes, love yourself. But also, analyse and be critical of how you think, act and behave. Self-love without self-awareness is useless." When you love, care and respect yourself you will learn to love, care and respect others.

Solitude is the state of being alone without being lonely; it is to be with yourself for just enough time until you can return to your people; it is where one discovers one is not alone.

- *Roma Chiplunkar*
(SYBA; English Special)

Self Love is Happiness

Being humans, we have no escape from getting emotionally hurt. Since our childhood we experience countless unfair instances, be it a truly unfair situation or just a misunderstanding of ourselves - they all make us feel bad. Such instances, where things don't happen as we want them to, start increasing in our lives as we grow up. These situations are of more or less intensity, and it leaves scars on our hearts when the pain is intense. This means that we are not able to forget such incidents and keep grieving about them for a long time.

Our time and attention would be wasted only if we don't learn anything from it. We all know the popular saying, "Experience is the best teacher." Hence, no matter what, if the experience is good or bad, we can always learn from it. Now, to find a good lesson from any experience, we just have to observe the thing which has newly been added to our mind. Many a time the lesson itself is the very thought that reminds us to not repeat the mistake which became the reason for that particular incident to happen. If we succeed in understanding what is to be avoided and what is to be corrected, we bring the whole process of learning from experience to the end.

Kintsugi is a Japanese concept wherein the damaged ceramic bowls are repaired by filling gold into its breakages. This is a good example of finding beauty in imperfections. Similar to this example, even we should try to beautify our flaws by accepting them. To live happily, we have to work on our mental stability. In other words, we can say that "Selflove is Happiness." Loving ourselves creates no insecurities and trust issues, which is what many people are experiencing these days. Loving other people can break our trust and hence our heart too. We cannot predict the future of any relationships we are in, because we don't always know what the other person thinks or feels.

Consequently, this shows that there is less transparency in the relationships with other humans. Whereas we can always estimate, to what extent we can be good or bad in an unforeseen circumstance. Therefore, primarily we should believe in ourselves, satisfy our demands, and know who we are. These are some ways of loving ourselves and that is the thing that gives us happiness.

We should try more and more to develop ourselves by knowing our interests or chasing our hobbies. Sometimes, the best way to know ourselves is simply to spend some time with ourselves. If there is no one in our surroundings, we get to hear our inner voice.

Hence, prioritizing our happiness and mental stability will help us live healthier and longer as well. Needless to say, it is important to have a positive approach toward life, only then we can know the strength in our scars too.

- *Tanaya Sanjay Kulkarni*
(TYBA; English Special)

The Beauty in Nature

“In Nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways and they’re still beautiful.”

- Alice Walker

The ability to see the beauty in the flaws of other people is a gift. The term, “beauty,” has been used to describe things that are elegant, that have no shortcomings, no scars or spots; they are in perfect shape. However, in reality, it’s the imperfections that walk hand in hand with beauty. Instead of accepting this fact, people have spent time, money, and energy on attaining perfection through artificial means. The concept of beauty does not deal only with the physical aspects; being emotionally and spiritually enlightened plays an important role in defining beauty.

Over the years, artists have spent time observing and finding beauty in the imperfect creations of Mother Nature. The works of such artists pay testimony to this fact. Let’s take the example of some of the greatest poets of our time. The great Victorian poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, believed in the existence of God in Nature. Through his poems, he praised God and highlighted the beauty found in his creations. For example, in his poem, “Pied Beauty”, the poet describes the vast spectrum of colours in Nature. He describes the brown and white patches on cows, the dots found on the rose-colored flesh of a fish as well as the land that is divided into pieces for agricultural purposes. All these creations are different from each other, in terms of size, shape, colours, texture, etc. They do not appear perfect to the human eye, yet they have their own distinctive qualities that make them beautiful.

William Wordsworth, one of the most renowned Romantic Poets of the 19th century, described his love and admiration of Nature through this quote, “Come forth into the light of things, let nature be your teacher.” Therefore, one of the most important lessons that we all can learn from Nature, is to accept ourselves, just the way we are, wholeheartedly.

The diversity found in Nature is extraordinary; from huge banyan trees to small shrubs and plants, from thorns found in a rose and a cactus, to squirrels, ants, worms, and magnificent elephants; each creature is unique and beautiful in its own way. They are proud of their identity and never change for anyone.

John Keats, one of the youngest Romantic Poets, described the intricate beauty of nature through art and philosophy. This idea can be seen prominently in his poem, "Ode on A Grecian Urn." The poet explores the concept of immortality and permanence through the sensuous, aesthetic beauty of an Urn. It is engraved with images of people, musicians, trees, and rustic life. The poet describes the beauty that is found in the imperfect aspects of the Urn. The images on the Urn are frozen in time, yet, the beauty lies in the fact that they will remain in that manner, for eternity. For example, the melodies played by the piper won't be heard by people, yet they are much sweeter than the melodies that can be heard, as the piper has been engraved on the Urn forever. Similarly, the trees will always remain happy and green as they will never shed their leaves.

However, it was not only the poets who saw beauty through imperfections. Vincent Van Gogh, one of the greatest painters of the 19th Century, truly found happiness in Nature. He believed that if a person can love nature, he or she can find beauty all around themselves. He created many of his works by going outside, setting up his easel, and observing the natural beauty all around him. Whether it was his sketches or oil paintings, he captured the beauty found in flowers, trees, grasslands, and fields. No matter how uneven the land was or whether it was being ploughed by farmers, these little imperfections provided a divine touch to his art.

Poets and artists have paved the path for people to appreciate natural beauty. The imperfections found in these creations made them look beautiful to the eyes of the artists. If Mother Nature can look so beautiful in her flaws, imagine, how happy, free and beautiful all of us can be, if we decide to accept our imperfections: our scars, our insecurities, and all those aspects about ourselves that we considered hideous enough to hide behind filters or makeup. Natural Beauty, whether it is concerned with human beings or Mother Nature, is the most beautiful form of beauty in existence.

- *Vandhya S. Tyer*
(TYBA; English Special)

Body Dysmorphia or Bigorexia

Body Dysmorphia is a mental disorder in which one is worried about his or her physical flaw or defect which might be imaginary. There are more than 1 million cases of this disorder in India every year.

Body Dysmorphia in men is also called Muscle Dysmorphia or Bigorexia. People suffering from this disorder are never satisfied with how their body looks and keep harming their body unknowingly. They tend to over-train in the gym, eat an excessive amount of protein, do too many cardiovascular exercises, and sometimes, even take steroids. These people are unable to focus on the other aspects of their life such as careers, personal relations, work, etc.

I was skinny fat and of an ectomorph body type a couple of years back. During the lockdown, I started my fitness journey. I started to lift weights; I wanted to have a physique like superstar Hrithik Roshan or YouTube influencer Saket Gokhale. I wasn't knowledgeable about the role of genetics, nutrition, strength, and many other things in building muscle mass. Thankfully, I became aware of these things and didn't use Performance Enhancing Anabolic Drugs (PEAD) which are very harmful to a person's health, but many youngsters use these ways to build muscle mass and their expectations are never-ending.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, a 7 time Mr. Olympia, a Hollywood actor, and a former Governor of California, is considered to be the best bodybuilder of all time. Even though he had one in billions of genetics, he had very weak abdominal muscles. He has acknowledged using PEADs in the year 1977. If the world's best bodybuilder has some weaknesses even after using PEADs, which were illegal back then, how can a normal person with normal genetics be perfect? It's important to accept the flaws in our bodies and be happy with the physique you can achieve.

Most of us who lift weights, want to live a healthy lifestyle, look lean and athletic. Working hard in the gym, focusing on your nutrition, and taking rest, is all we need to do. There is no rationality in using PEADs which affect health very adversely in the long run just to look good for some time. I hope everyone understands that it's very difficult to achieve the dream physique and although it's good to have a dream but be satisfied with your progress as you have to be better than yourself.

Say NO to PEADS or Steroids!

- *Atharva Milind Sardeshpande*
(TYBA; English Special)

THE SUPERWOMAN OF INDIA

The other day, I got to hear about the release of the sixth volume of *Odyssey* and the topic given was *Kintsugi* - a Japanese term, in a more philosophical way, for being imperfect makes one shine brighter. So, I thought of writing about this beautiful personality named **Sunitha Krishnan**. The reason I chose to write about her is that since the time I got to know about her I was so overwhelmed by the work she's been doing for the oppressed and rape victims. I wanted everyone to know the massive efforts the lady is putting in to rescue the girls who are being trafficked every day in India.

Sunitha Krishnan is a social worker who works against sex trafficking in Mumbai. Sunitha was born in *Bangalore* on 23rd May 1969. Though her hometown is in Hyderabad, Telangana; she did her schooling in *Kendriya Vidyalaya* in *Waltair*, *Vishakhapatnam*, *Andhra Pradesh*.



Then after she completed her graduation from *St. Joseph's college, Bangalore*. Talking about her overall qualification, Sunitha has done her Master's in Social Work and holds a PhD in the same subject. She is married to an Indian film director named *Rajesh Touchriver*. Sunitha from her childhood itself was profound of teaching and helping the needy ones. At the age of eight, she used to teach dance to mentally challenged children, and after four years when she turned twelve she was running schools in slums for underprivileged students.

It was at this age, she was brutally gang raped by 8 misogynist men while working in an initiative *Neo-Literacy Campaign*. The men raped her because in their view she was interfering in the world which only men are chosen to handle.

Like a true warrior, this incident motivated her to work against human trafficking, helping the rape victims and providing them shelters. She moved to Hyderabad and joined the People's Initiative Network (PIN) She started a school at the vacated houses with red door areas which later she named Prajwala. She gathered fanatic people like her to run the initiative. According to the team, Prajwala is based on five pillars: prevention, protection, rescue, rehabilitation and integration. This organization has helped more than 17,000 survivors of human trafficking and provided them training in carpentry, welding, printing, masonry and house keeping.

Talking more about the NGO, this NGO has educated over 8,000 children of prostitutes, children of pregnable communities and children at risk of being trafficked.



Currently, Prajwala owns 17 rehabilitation centres for child prostitutes, three emergency counselling centres at police stations, a rehabilitation training unit, and a treatment centre for women and children being trafficked, many of whom are victims of child trafficking and HIV.

Sunitha Krishnan was then appointed as the Andhra Pradesh Regional Trade Union Commissioner and was instrumental in India's new bill on rape, which was passed in Parliament in 2013 to increase punishments for sexual violence and harassment. Sunitha everyday with her team fights for the innocents to provide them justice and a better living.

Throughout her career, she worked for the community and for the needy. As a result, she has received numerous awards and honours at national and international levels. Following are some of her achievements:

- CNN-IBN Real Hero Award, Reliance Foundation, 2008.
- Perdita Huston International Award for Human Rights, United Nations of Capital Hill, Washington DC, 2006.
- Citation from Governor of Andhra Pradesh for Contribution to Women's Empowerment, 2004.
- Stree Shakti Puraskar, Government of India, 2003.
- Tejaswini Award, FICCI, 2010.
- Kelvinator Woman Power Award, Colors TV, 2010.
- Gangadhar Humanitarian Award, Kerala, 2010.
- Vanitha Women of the Year, Manorama Publications, 2009.
- Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Heroes from US Department of State, 2009.
- Akrithi Woman of the Year, Rotary Club Coimbatore, 2012.
- IRDS Safdar Hashmi award for Human Rights, 2012.
- Women in Excellence Award, SHE Foundation, 2012.
- Outstanding Social Work Award, Government of Kerala, 2012.
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice International Leadership Award, New York, 2011.
- N Joseph Mundaserry Award for Outstanding Social Work, Qatar, 2011.
- Aakruthi Woman of the Year Award, Rotary International, 2011.
- G8 Woman Award, Colors TV, 2011.
- Indiavision Person of the Year Award, Indiavision TV Channel, 2011.
- Human Rights Award, Vital Voices Global Partnership, Washington DC, 2011.
- Garshom Pravasi Vanitha Award 2011, Kuwait.
- 24th Yudhvir Foundation Memorial Award, 2015.
- Mother Teresa Awards for Social Justice, 2014.
- CIVICUS Innovation Award, 2014.
- Kairali Ananthapuri Award, Muscat, 2014.
- People of the Year award from LIMCA Book of Records, 2014.
- Woman of Substance Award, Rotary Club Mumbai, 2014.
- Anita Parekh Award For Women's Empowerment, Rotary Club Mumbai, 2013.

- Rotary Social Consciousness Award & Paul Harris Fellowship, Rotary Club Mumbai, 2013.
- Godfrey Phillips National Amodini Award, 2013.
- Living Legends Award from Human Symphony Foundation, 2013.
- Mahila Thilakam Award, Government of Kerala, 2013.
- DVF Exemplary Woman Award, Dianne Von Furstenberg Foundation, 2013.
- Outstanding Woman Award, National Commission for Women, 2013.
- India Times listed Krishnan as one of the 11 Human Rights Activists Whose Life Mission Is To Provide Others With A Dignified Life.
- Padma Shri in the field of Social Work, 2016.
- Inaugural Sri Sathya Sai Award for Human Excellence, 2016.
- Tallberg Global Leadership Prize.
- Franco-German Award For Human Rights & Rule of law.
- PRAYUKTI SAMMAAN 2017 by Dainik Prayukti Hindi Dailyat Constitution Club of India, Delhi.



It was difficult for me to write this article; to clarify the topic that I have chosen, because for me every rape victim is just as common as a woman who is not raped.

This is dedicated to some percentage of the population who have a different views on women who have been raped in this community. To me every woman is a warrior but a woman who was raped comes out more powerful in the society. The community is forcing her to commit suicide after such incidents but she goes out of her way to teach society a lesson. This was just one story of a great woman out of thousands.

- Anmol Kamble
(TYBA; English Special)

Making Peace with Imperfections

All of us seek perfection in our lives, whether it is part of self-improvement or setting our aims. It is a very normal trait of human beings to look for ideals. Perfection might be defined as a 'state of being complete or flawless.' Once something is declared perfect, it needs no further improvements or additions. It is free from errors and defects. We may perceive such perfection in the value, configuration, utility, function, or performance of a thing. We look up to perfection in our lives because we believe it improves the level of happiness and quality of life resulting in achievement and fulfillment. We even have our own assumptions about something being perfect and imperfect, just as we all have our ideals. We think a certain shape, number, word, or way of living is perfect. However, sometimes people go overboard in chasing perfection as they feel this compulsion to deal with everything that consists of the smallest of flaws. This is known as 'perfectionism.' This excess concern about your own imperfections is undesirable and disturbing.

The point is to avoid making some discouraging statements about our pursuit of seeking perfection. Seeking perfection should never be out of aversion to imperfections. For example, you can't be a good person by hating bad people. Likewise, you cannot bring peace in your life until you make peace with imperfections. For instance, you may seek prosperity without loathing poverty, meaning you should remain calm and unbothered even when you are put into a situation where you have to deal with something that falls out of your set of 'perfections' or 'ideals'. The only way to pursue peace with our imperfections is to maintain perfect equanimity and cultivate tolerance. It enables us to remain peaceful while dealing with any duality that we come across. Life is unpredictable. Sometimes your most proficient actions may have a negative result and shatter all your expectations. What we learn from the 'Bhagavad Gita' is that it is always better to perform our actions that are 'karma' without any expectations.

We should not worry about the outcomes since we cannot control the end result. Getting rid of all our expectations will free us from the burden of guilt and disappointment in addition to helping us improve our performance.

Now, 'imperfection' is not a derogatory word, rather it is similar to 'living flow'. Imperfection means there is still room to improvise, to add something better. There is much more to come ahead, a lot more is going to happen. For example, human life itself is an imperfection on its own because as much as we live, we learn. Our life is a chance for us to improve to add another beautiful aspect to it. So, why run behind 'perfection'? Once you are perfect, what will you be doing? Where will you be going? Being perfect is the state of all your potential becoming complete and fruitful. When that happens there's nothing more to it than the final end which is the 'death'. This doesn't mean we should stop living to achieve perfection, it doesn't mean we should be disappointed with everything that comes to us because it is not perfect. We should rather accept our imperfections and live in totality.

Life will never be perfect; from one to another imperfection, it goes on, it grows, it evolves. We can simply say 'imperfection is life'. So, why condemn the imperfections? It is very true and upfront that the whole existence is a work in progress. Mother Nature itself is an imperfect mechanism because it did not get produced at once or, it never stopped evolving. If the world was utterly perfect there would not be any space for new creations or preservation and destruction.

So, why not embrace all the imperfections, inequalities, and incompleteness that we have and be grateful for the hope they grant us. Let us all be grateful to rejoice in the innumerable possibilities in life. Only if there is imperfection, we can hope for change and improvements. We are all indebted to the imperfections of the universe for making us want to experience different things and overall hope of living.

This is why wise people take imperfections as points of their self-transformation. They perceive it as the structure of the universe and accept them without any judgment.

You can always have a sense of perfection with worldly objects that compliment you but you can't achieve stability and equanimity unless you make peace with the animosities in your life. When you have peace within and beyond, it gives you the strength to accept the world as it is.

- *Neha Kishor Kulkarni*
(TYBA; History Special)

This is Life!

Whenever I am overwhelmed by how unachievable and impossible my goals look, I remind myself to look back at my reading journey. I began reading when I was very young. It wasn't direct 'reading', actually- my parents would read to me and I would sincerely listen. It was surprising to them as well to see a hyper-active child remain still in a place for a while, to see me engrossed. My mom was, (and still is) a teacher in the same school that I went to and thus I had the benefit of taking the books from the library home. I remember how my mom used to enter the bus after school ended and used to hand me a book that she'd gotten for me. It used to take around an hour or more to reach home, and surprisingly till then, I would already finish half the book. The next half of the book would be over by the bus journey on the next day and she would return the book surprising the librarian.

My parents always had conflicting views over this- my 'reading' on the bus. My father insisted on looking outside the window and seeing what was going on in the world while my mother insisted on utilizing that time for reading. I opted to read, which made it quite obvious to showcase whom I was more inclined towards. 'Teacher's pet', especially 'English teacher's pet' was my common name in school. I was very confident about my English and the overall subject, back then. I still am, in some way. That confidence is forever mine to behold. I've been disappointed or rather I have failed by the assumptions I held till now but not English, not my reading, never! And I hope that stays forever because even though a lot of my assumptions might have been busted or changed by now, just something about my English, my reading makes me so confident about myself. It makes me feel that I do have something of my own, it makes me feel that I'm capable of at least something if not anything. And if that is gone too, I don't know what I'll do. Reading has always been my safe space, has always offered me comfort in times of pain, grief, anxiety, and uncertainty.

I have never felt judged, disappointed, or criticized by books or by words. They've offered me so much- definitely more than just knowledge.

As years went by, 'reading' slowly took a back seat. The same parents who encouraged me to read now insisted on keeping it aside for a while and focusing on studies instead. Alas, my young, naive self gave into that. I stopped reading. I studied and studied and scored well. Everyone was proud, everyone was happy but somehow, I wasn't, because I didn't find anything unique in it, nothing of my own. Everyone studied hard, everyone gave up their sleep, scored well and that's about it- I didn't want to be 'everyone'. I was always told that I was 'extraordinary' and when the so-called 'ordinary' milestones were expected of me, I was confused and remained so for the next two years.

In Class 12th I took Science, like every 'normal' kid in the country. And thus, I began my hassling into the rat race of standing out doing the same as everyone else. I used to study a lot to my surprise but something did not feel right. I never understood why or what I was working so hard for. Do I want to do this or am I doing this because my parents want me to? Or because everyone else was doing it too? My dilemma, of course, wasn't greeted very well and bottled down to one thing- that I wasn't hardworking enough, that I was lazy. This scenario and the confused feeling stayed with me for nearly the entire year of class 12.

Incidentally, my childhood best friend had this ritual of gifting me a book on each birthday of mine. In class 11th, she'd gifted me this book called, 'How To Get From Where You Are To Where You Want To Be' by Jack Canfield, which lay there, on my study table for a year. Just ten days before my 12th Board exams, I was done. I was done with the constant dilemma, anxiety, and taunts- because I was working hard, I know I was but none of it was making any sense to me. The hard work I slaved through never answered my questions of 'why?' and 'what for?' And, that is why I picked up the book that lay on my table for over a year.

I won't say that it instantly changed my life but it surely was my savior then. It guided me towards the light again. It might not have answered what my 'why' in life was but it certainly told me 'why' I shouldn't do what I was doing then. I've never looked back ever since, whether right or wrong, I've always taken my own decisions based on what I felt right at that moment and most of them were wrong but I don't regret any one of them. It was definitely a learning experience.

It was hard getting back to reading again, slowly, one day at a time, I read. Different genres, different authors traversing me to strange lands. And I can say this for sure the growth that I've seen in myself from the time I began reading again is so much more than all the years before. I wonder many times that I would have remained so ignorant if I hadn't begun reading again! Three years later, I cannot go to sleep if I don't read. Yet again, it has become something that solely remains mine to behold. Over the past year, I've even begun writing and have even gotten published thrice! I am now a part of a reading community on Instagram where I run a little corner to share my love of books. And now, I want to be a good writer, I possess a kind of hunger for getting better at my writing and the best way there is, is to 'read'. And so, I read, extensively and unapologetically.

However, I think somewhere along the way, I crossed a line. Seeing all those people setting an array of reading goals, I set for myself one too. This began as something to encourage me to read more but, soon became a 'task' that I had to do whether I was willing or not. At times, I found myself reading a short story purely so that it could cross one more book off my reading goal. Even though I won't deny the fact that I've come across some terrific narratives via the same but the intention in itself wasn't pure. It took me a while to understand that it is okay if I don't read ten novels a month, that it is okay if I don't finish my reading goal, it is okay if I don't like a celebrated book. In short, I had to unlearn many things to reach where I am now- in a healthy relationship with my reading, or at least I'm trying to build one.

I read as and when I find time, I try not to stress after the fact that I didn't finish a novel for three months, I try to be present while reading and if not, I don't read at all.

As I'm writing this now, going through all that I've written above, I realize that 'this is life!' - learning, unlearning, falling, failing, getting up, trying again one day at a time. All of this is life. My reading journey is my story of inspiration that I keep coming back to whenever I'm in a puzzle. I sit down, take a deep breath, think of my reading journey and I know that everything is possible and achievable with time and patience.

- *Pratiksha Jore*
(TYBA; Psychology Special)

Perfect Beings, Imperfect Shadow

Several things in our surroundings appear to be perfect — our neighbor's garden, an elegant Renaissance painting, or our favourite actor's hairstyle. Such objects appear to be designed with profound attention to the intricacies and taking care of every aspect of that entity. However, a deeper reflection raises an important question: Why should perfect things appear beautiful? Can't we find beauty in flaws?

In today's race where every other person is trying to be perfect, whereas those lacking in it are becoming the daily news. Humans fight with unexplainable emotions which can lead to bleeding, turning into wounds, and at last becoming scars inscribed in them. One hurtful word opens them up, exploding, like knives stabbing you, but when you see those scars given to someone else; seeing them battling with it and coming out as a warrior, lightens up hope within you; that made you gather all those scattered pieces to complete your puzzling life; to take a dose of courage that will fade those scars away to infinity.

Learning to accept our flaws is a process that will lead us to a deeper sense of peace and fulfillment. It tells us to start anew despite our past failures because without those imperfections we would have never realized our true strengths and weaknesses. Accepting your negative side, with a pinch of virtue and moving on is the real beauty, and trying to be more positive, day by day adds more beauty to it.

Anything that appears beautiful need not be perfect because they themselves had their own hardships to overcome. To illustrate an example, think of a coconut tree with a curved trunk after a storm, or a stream that starts from melting snow and changes, as it makes its way towards the pull off the sea, or even a mountain getting worn and torn to make distinctive rocks which through the rivers reaches land making the soil profile.

All these elements changed their form when needed and didn't conform to anyone form specifically; instead when we pursue a specific form relentlessly, we're really pursuing perfection and when it is out of function we let it go.

Nature teaches us to embrace our perfect imperfections. When we can embrace all as it is without any judgement, with calm hearts - that is healing. We heal our inner self and with this it'll heal the outer world too.

- *Akanksha Gurjar*
(SYBSc; Biotechnology)

Perfectly Flawsome

"Strive for perfection in everything that you do," is what we hear a lot of times in our daily lives. But, why do people insist on attaining perfection? This is a dynamic topic in itself because everyone has their own definition of perfection. To define it universally, being perfect is being free from faults and flaws. However, in reality, can someone be completely flawless? The answer to that would be a definite "no."

We are exposed to so many social sources that give us the vibe of everything being immaculate but, we fail to realize the filter behind it. We need to understand that we live in a pretentious world. When we fake things they merely give us temporary happiness. Though perhaps, there is a reason for faking it. We are scared; scared to be rejected, scared to be left out.

There are some unspoken stereotypical standards set by the society in which we have trapped ourselves. Every day we wake up putting on a mask to hide our scars. Eventually, it has turned habitual. John Ruskin in his book 'The Stones of Venice,' says "to banish imperfection is to destroy expression, to check exertion, to paralyze vitality." Having scars, making mistakes is the evidence that you're trying. Your wounds are the proof of your efforts. "Even the scars that were formed from my mistakes are my very own constellation" is one of my favourite lyrics from the song 'Love Myself' by a Korean musical group that made me realize that your imperfections are a part of you that makes you unique.

If everyone were to be flawless, we all would be identical. The main argument remains that our imperfections make us phenomenally 'flawsome.' This word refers to the context that every individual is awesome regardless of their flaws. We often try to mould ourselves, visualize ourselves from people's perspectives. Seeking to be impeccable isn't wrong at all but, losing your true self in that process is not right.

Knowing your limits and striving to break through them every single day is what I call 'perfection.' Showing flaws and faults helps you to cherish the way you are. Delineating it with the world-famous 'Leaning Tower of Pisa' in Italy which is imperfectly perfect wouldn't be incorrect. Its anomaly is what has made it so distinct. Embrace the beautiful mess that you are and eventually you will lose the fear of rejection. You will acknowledge that you don't need anyone's validation to love yourself. Until we don't love ourselves, we can't expect others to love us. Rather than running towards a mirage start your journey towards yourself, to find your true persona, to appreciate the way you are, to be the best version of yourself which is incomparable.

“Just abide by your mistakes and make your inner self resurrect because you are born to be real; not to be perfect”

- Akshata Chippa
(MSc: Organic Chemistry part II)

Lessons of The Land and Wild

In a world where we can't get through the day without a quick scroll on Instagram, a constant track of how many likes we got on Facebook or an episode of a new series on Netflix, it can be a quite daunting task to go out into nature and simply observe everything it has to offer. The very fact that some of us experience a complete detachment from nature is unfortunate because nature is our first home, and most often, the remedy.

One fine afternoon, four years ago, I decided to go on a wildlife safari in the jungles of central India. You may be wondering why I didn't choose something simpler like going on a hike or a road trip, but truth be told, I've always held a fascination for raw nature and when I got the opportunity to explore a world far from the chaos of the bustling city, I took it.

The first-ever safari I went on was the Tadoba Andhari National Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra. I won't go into details about where it's located and how to get there, but I will tell you that a wildlife safari is something you absolutely must experience at least once in life!

Now imagine this.

Specks of golden warmth slowly spread across the darkened sky, stretching far into a hundred shades of green that adorned the luxurious land before me. The crowing of a rooster was heard somewhere in the distance, as robins warbled in the towering trees outside. The dawn was a chorus of blue and yellow, scanty rays gently kissing the mustard fields, melting away the sparkling morning dew and waking the insects beneath the earth from their slumber. The sunrise called to the restful spirit of the lands of Tadoba as if a mother to her child. The mellow light, bold and free, danced on flowering white-water lilies and bright wildflowers, giving them a new life, and scarecrows in each field, bathed in the sun's rosy glow. The farmers busied themselves in cowsheds while their wives boiled masala tea in greasy pots behind the kitchen counters of thatched huts nearby.



The safari starts quite early, so we had to be present at the gates by 5:30 am. After half an hour of dallying in and out of tea stalls and making small talk with the members of my group, we were allowed to enter the tiger reserve at 6 am. The jeeps we travelled in were open and without a roof, so we had to stop for short breaks quite often, park in the shade of the lime yellow bamboo thickets and hydrate ourselves, or stop by a river that swerved through the trees, sparkling like tinsel against the sun. The guides would narrate stories of their cattle being chased by a leopard, or how they had witnessed the earth shake beneath their feet when a territorial fight between two male tigers took place. This lifted our spirits. We stopped to enjoy the deer sprint from one patch of green plains to the other and watched a crocodile nap on the riverbanks. We admired the colours of land and how a pair of owls huddled in the hollow of a tree were only visible if you looked closely and knew exactly where to find them. I took photographs of butterflies lazily drifting over a jewel-blue stream, swirling around fresh, crisp wild berries.

The biggest thrill was to track a tiger or leopard in the wild. Patience is key I was told over and over again because it was no joke spending endless hours in the blazing heat just to get a glimpse of the majestic creature. When we eventually did see a tiger, the joy of watching the big wild cat cross our paths, its orange and black striped coat glinting in the light and stride graceful, the hours we had spent tracking it suddenly seemed trivial.

The importance of not rushing. Nature is never in a hurry, and there's a time for every moment to take place. When you visit a place like a forest where you have nothing to do besides sit and observe, where your phone receives no range and a calm tranquility exists, you will realize that everything happens at its own pace here, just like it does in life. On the other hand, humans are always in a rush, often forgetting that life has its own pace too, and you cannot rush into life just because everyone else seems to be ahead of you. Your timing is your own.

Another thing that four years of travelling and working in the field of wildlife taught me was balance. Everything in life depends on balance and, the forest is an apt example when it comes to this. Too much or too little of something would cause havoc and similarly, we need to maintain a balance in life to stay sane.

Lastly, an essential lesson I learned was that good things will always come to you, in due course of time; that there is always something to look forward to, no matter how bleak life may seem at the moment. There were times when we had a dry safari with no sightings at all, an uneventful day of nothing but watching troops of monkeys with their long, slender tails, buff bodies, and soulful eyes sitting atop the Amla trees in contemplation, swinging from one tender branch to the other at the sound of our jeep, but as the day slowly faded to an end, and with the sun setting in the far distance, hues of yellow, pink and tangerine filling the once blue canvas, like poetry, came the realization that there was another day after the darkness to look forward to. There is always hope on the other side of despair.

Besides these lessons, there's a lot more we can learn from nature if we simply give ourselves the time to do so. Nature is resilient, ever-changing, flexible and forgiving, qualities that we can incorporate into our own lives to make it simpler, better and with that being said, I'll leave the rest of the qualities for you to find out ourselves!

- *Shamita Patharkar*
(Alumna)

The Crumpled Paper

“I can't get anything right!”, cried Eric, flinging a crumpled piece of paper at the door. “Don't you say that young man!”, his mother exclaimed, entering his room. Wiping his eyes, she picked up the paper which he had been trying relentlessly to craft into a leaf for the paper chrysanthemum.

“Don't lose heart Eric, you have a long life ahead of you that will be riddled with hardships- hardships that you will have to face, hardships that you will have to overcome. Giving up and running away shall only and only add to the burden of guilt and further torment you. There is nothing to be gained from doing so...” she advised, neatly straightening and making new folds out of the paper.

Quite gently, she placed the new leaf beside Eric, who had his face buried in a cushion. Slowly, he pulled his face out of the dark sanctuary of the cushion and took a long look at the newly formed leaf, which seemed to be breathing, before bursting into tears and embracing his beloved mother, sobbing into her shoulder.

She stroked his hair and whispered into his ears...

“Always believe in yourself my son...”

- *Raghav Deshpande*
(External Contributor)

Self-Love and Me

It is rightly said when people say that self-love is the best love.

What is *self-love*?

Self-love in itself means loving yourself. The kind of love where you accept your flaws and blemishes; your good and bad, your insecurities and your qualities.

Let me tell you, nobody is born in this world to hate themselves; in fact, no one is born with self-hate. It is created in your own mind, but that doesn't mean you are the cause of your self-hate, maybe it's also the comments that you receive from someone that lowers your self-esteem. Sometimes, we're so busy making our lives perfect for someone else, that we forget to live for ourselves!

I would like to state a theory that I personally believe in - everybody has a purpose to live, which they need to complete; either fate plays its game or you figure out the 'purpose' for yourself. There are a few 'purposes' that are obligatory. One of them is love. Nobody has survived without love. Love is not just a relationship with your significant other, your siblings, or your parents, but it is also a relationship with yourself.

The following things that I'll be stating are based on true events:

Whenever I think about my past self, it was based on someone else's imagination; and this image looked better in their minds than in reality, and, guess what? I made efforts to become that person! Why? Because I was lagging in a few things and my (curated) "personality" didn't have those cracks. Constant comparisons, comments about my body, etc., led to insecurities that made me a toxic person in and out. This new version of me was despised by me.

A year went by and I never did anything for myself; I felt like a puppet. I tried *escaping*. I started doing things that would help me out of this mess I had fallen into.

Nothing ever happened, because I had stopped accepting myself after realizing this, I decided that change was necessary. So, I began the journey of self-love. I started writing down five good things about myself, the faults in me, and how I could improve them daily; becoming motivated by people and things around me rather than perceiving it as a competition or something toxic. This helped me. It truly did.

I am grateful to say that I hadn't reached the stage where it was too difficult to back out. I started to appreciate the little things around me—good music, writing, clouds, sunshine, MYSELF.

In the end, I realized one thing— if there is anything you want to do in this world it is for *You and you only*. Is this too selfish or greedy? This thought must've crossed your mind, but if it means that you need to be selfish for prioritising your mental health and happiness first, so be it. Once self-love flourishes, you enjoy the process rather than focusing on the end result.

It is tough at first, but baby steps help. Big things take time to accomplish. Remember, there's no specific age, to begin with, for self-love or to destroy self-hate. I am fifteen, nobody has a perfect life. Time is what you need, and happiness will knock on your door.

I would like to conclude with one of my favorite quotes by one of my favorite artists, whose songs were one of the major reasons why I started loving myself – Louis Tomlinson from One Direction.

“Live life for the moment, because everything else is uncertain.”

So, just enjoy the little things, be grateful every single day, become fearless, and you will become a person who lives for themselves and loves themselves. Life is short, how long will you go on hating it?

- Mahira Pathania
(External Contributor)

The Broken Mug

During the lockdown of 2020, I got the opportunity to explore my creative side. My coffee mug, after undergoing a daily wash and experiencing a bad fall from the kitchen counter, was no longer the bright, sturdy mug it used to be. Instead of throwing it away, I decided to give it a makeover. The mug was enveloped in coats of paint and was surmounted on a base made of marbles. It may not be as pretty as the ones sold in a store, but it's a product of Kintsugi, making it more special and unique in its own way!



BEFORE



AFTER

- Vandhya Tyer

(TYBA; English Special)

Life goes on

- Roma Chiplunkar
(SYBA; English Special)

Life is what we do, what we feel,
what we want every day,
Life is what gives us life,
Life is the running force that
powers through when we have none,
Life is what was, what is
and what will be,
Life teaches us this...
It goes on

Witches and miscreants are many...
No one is good or bad...
It's the circumstances and decisions
that make them,
Trusting not everyone,
But the select few,
In your life;
The valued, the loved,
Does the trick...
Life teaches us this,
It goes on...

While trying not to lose someone,
Don't lose yourself,
Hate is a strong word,
Feelings can run deep,
Optimism or Pessimism,
Too much is too bad anyway,
Staying neutral is what we want,
Trying to survive is what they call it,
Life teaches us this,
It goes on...

I Am Home

It's been a while,
I've been all mine,
The sun rises within,
The sun sets within,
I've been quite fine.

My heart feels less heavy now,
There's not much space for
pebbles and stones,
I've placed my heart on a boat,
It's sailing quite smooth now,
As I've been rowing it all by myself
through the storms now.

He felt like home, and yet
a place I'd never wish to be at
for any longer,
Happiness begins within, so
I've been a home to me now.

I've taken in all that I love to do,
Humming a song, grooving to a
beat or two,
I've been caressing a small plant,
Turning 'I can't'
Into 'I can'.

I've been taking to art,
I sketch, I paint, I doodle,
I sing, I dance now,
I listen, I sit so quiet
calming all of my inner riots now.

I've been back to words,
I've been weaving so much
more poetries now,
It feels good, so much better now.

It's been a while,
I've been all mine now,
The sun rises within,
The sun sets within,
I've been quite fine now.
To a place I'd long to be,
I AM HOME now.

- *Shreeya Panda*
(TYBA; Psychology
Special)

Perfection as a Metaphor

- *Mahira Pathania*
(External Contributor)

Nobody is born perfect, it is just a metaphor,
Because perfection is when you are happy with yourself.
When your scars are embraced,
And your negativity shatters away,
When you look in the mirror and smile to yourself out of love.

Yes, I know we all have our defects,
Some are too thin, some fat
Some too tall, some short.
Some have trouble accepting themselves because of their past,
But guess what? It's okay if you feel that way!

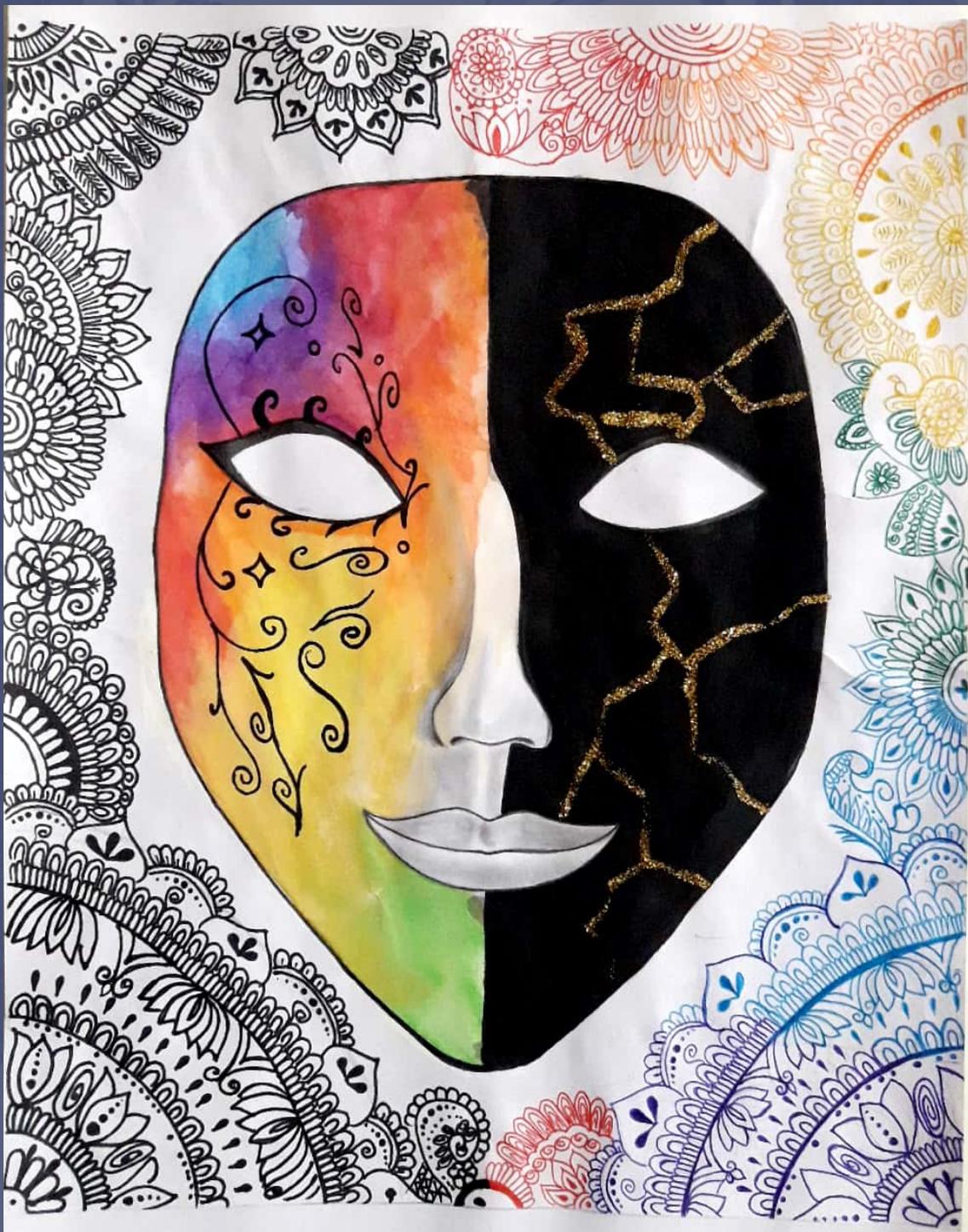
In such circumstances, your friend is time,
Because it has the power of giving you what you need, which no one can.
Embracing yourself the way you are is strenuous,
But you can do it once you begin, I know you will.

Trust me when I say it is possible
Embracing yourself the way you are,
You'll love yourself and show respect and faith
And you'll preserve each moment.

So, in the end, as I sign off
I would like you to know that you have a place in the world,
That there are people out there who care for you,
Forgetting all your insecurities, your scars and your pain,
They will be there with you till the end of time.

But above all, you should be there for yourself always,
Because you and I both know,
Self-love is the best love,
And it will get you to so many places, you never even dreamed of...

Artwork



- *By Akshata Chippa*
(MSc : Organic Chemistry part II)

Crossword Clues

Across

1. a three-letter word is referred to as an insect and as a person's failure.
4. a ten-letter word that demarks lacking qualities or resources to meet a task.
6. a ten-letter synonymous with the word 'lack', 'shortage' or 'shortcoming.'
7. a five-letter word used for a stain on one's reputation.
9. a four-letter word which is an unhealed mark.
11. a four-letter word that makes you weak but the antonym of this makes one stand out.
13. a nine-letter word that is a medical term used for distortion of natural form.

Down

2. a six-letter word which is a technical term for a fault of the equipment.
3. a six-letter word that is usually used to find a lack of perfection in inanimate objects.
5. a seven-letter word that is a discoloured mark on one's skin.
8. a thirteen-letter word that suggests one is not enough for a task that one cannot fulfill.
10. an eight-letter word for the idiom; 'a chink in one's armour' or an 'Achilles heel'.
12. a seven-letter word identical to the word 'disadvantage'.

Word Search

Q O U N M S M K C D O A I C S E I V A H
P A C Q T S I D Z T E P Y C E G T I I Y
U P X R U N I B A S I B A W L N X I I C
W K O O T O C J K V H F L O F U L U C D
A N V S L I S S H F D W E T A S U L J T
G Q U L A T E W C O K L U Q C R R H B D
E G Y J C C F B Y Q O Y O C C V M A B U
I P C L Q E I Y G H O O N G E K S K C K
T V O K U F F V S N R F S D P X W T Q S
N V N A E R H P A O C Y R M T V T J X P
D Q R U R E T H H D V U Q E A J R T V K
V D M Z W P C R F I T V D G N I L A E H
H A K G A M B I G B L M I E C L Y I I I
K T M W R I F S V R D O U T E W Y H R E
P O T T E R Y P L J O Q S F J L Q S O B
J R P E Q D A A J Q I W K O V D X U Q B
C E R A M I C A T N Z E T O P E H R A F
X T I Z H I P A U U X L L H G H I U Z Z
Z J J W A A F V Z T Q O B B C A Y G W W
H M Z K N M Y S C A M V Y U D S C T L L

- Kintsugi
- Wabi Sabi
- Urushi
- Chanoyu
- Vie
- Self acceptance
- Imperfections
- Lacquerware
- Gold
- Ceramic
- Growth
- Japan
- Healing
- Scars
- Unique
- Pottery
- Philosophy
- Strong

Recommendations

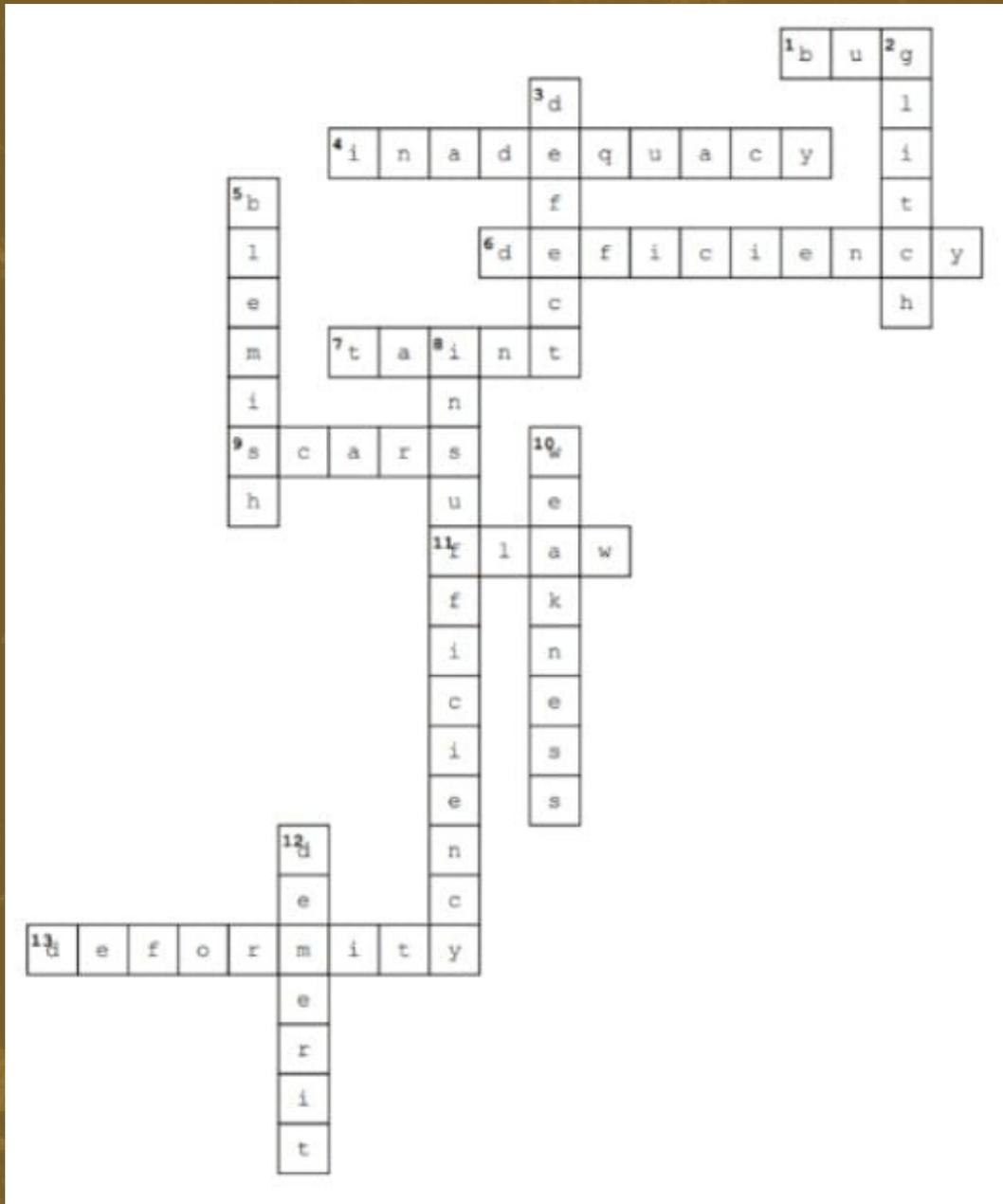
Books:

- Circe - Madeline Miller
- The Phantom of the Opera - Gaston Leroux
- Frankenstein - Mary Shelley
- Holding Up the Universe - Jennifer Niven
- Metamorphosis - Franz Kafka
- The Midnight Library - Matt Haig
- Jane Eyre - Charlotte Brontë
- Harry Potter series - J. K. Rowling
- The Secret Garden - Frances Hodgson Burnett
- How I Taught My Grandmother to Read - Sudha Murthy
- The Fault in our Stars - John Green

Movies:

- Baala
- Gone Kesh
- Highway
- Bridget Jones Diary
- Chappak
- Moxie
- The Breakfast Club
- A Long Way Down
- Black
- Taare Zamin Par
- Encanto

Crossword Solution



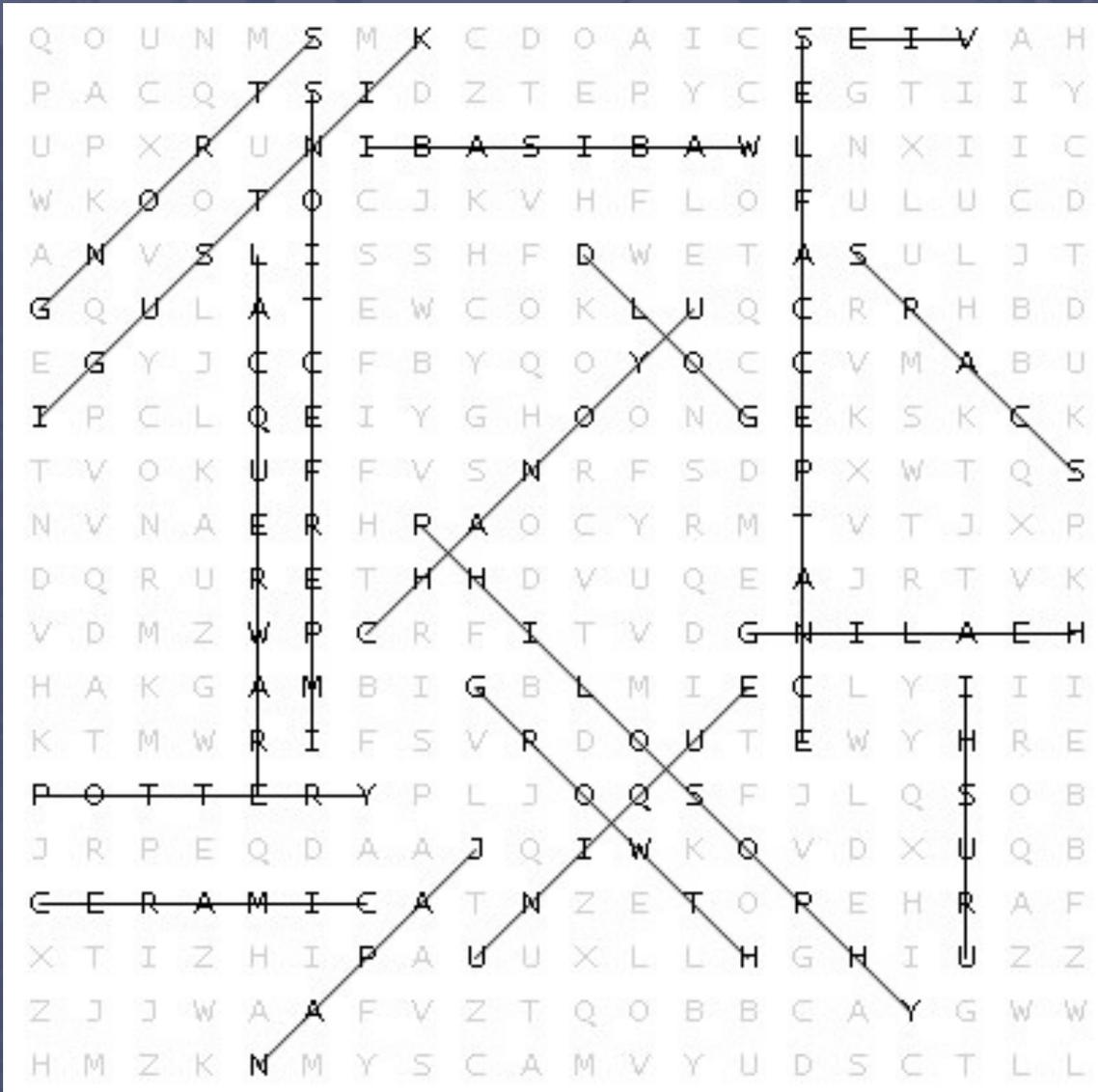
Across

1. bug
4. inadequacy
6. deficiency
7. taint
9. scars
11. flaw
13. deformity

Down

2. glitch
3. defect
5. blemish
8. insufficiency
10. weakness
12. demerit

Word search Solution



- Kintsugi
- Wabi Sabi (A Japanese aesthetic and philosophy of finding beauty in imperfections)
- Urushi (a traditional Japanese lacquer used for Kintsugi)
- Chanoyu (Japanese Tea Ceremony)
- Vie (French - Life)
- Self acceptance
- Imperfections
- Lacquerware
- Gold
- Ceramic
- Growth
- Japan
- Healing
- Scars
- Unique
- Pottery
- Philosophy
- Strong

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty

- *By P.B. Shelley*

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form, where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?

Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom, why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

...

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes;
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

(An excerpt)

Connect With Us

We would love to hear what you think about the magazine and our recommendations along with your ideas for the next issue!

Drop us a text on Instagram:
[@department_of_english](#)

OR

Email Us:
engdept.mordern16@gmail.com

