



September 2016

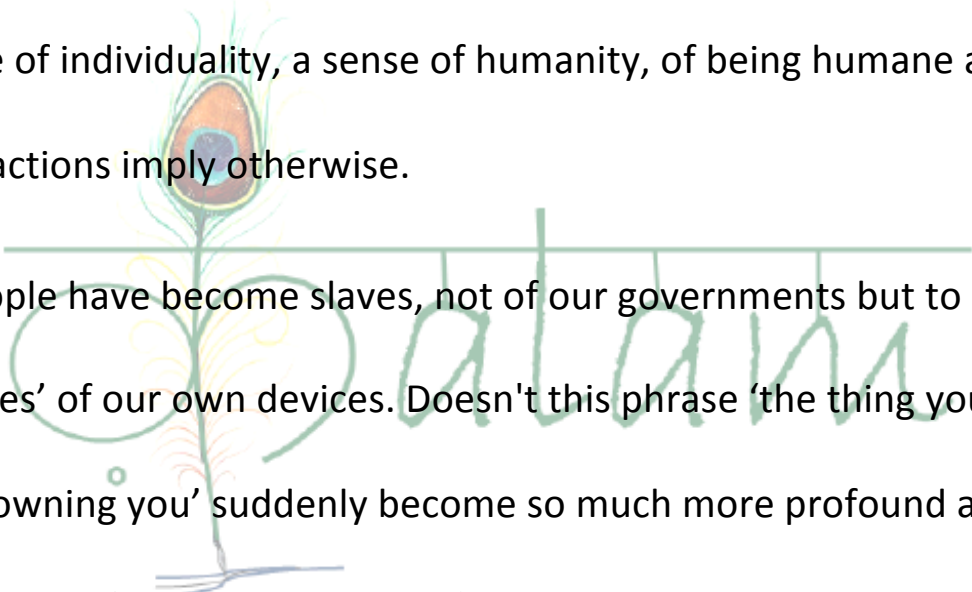
Humans – Humane?

-Somya Guglani

We live in an age where people value mobile phones more than they value actual lives; they would cover 1000 miles if they had to, to make sure they get the latest version of an iPhone but wouldn't call on a relative who's about to die. We were taught to be kind in school by our teachers, and the same teachers can choose to be unsympathetic and set a bad example. It's ironic how as we grow older, we try to become more sympathetic and the world that taught us to do so become more apathetic which isn't a bad trait as long as it doesn't become a habit and then turn into plain spite! It is intriguing how we use religion to shield ourselves; to explain away the harm we do to others and then burst out into flames when the same tactic is used by others and it is

even more fascinating that we choose to kill to educate other about not taking life.

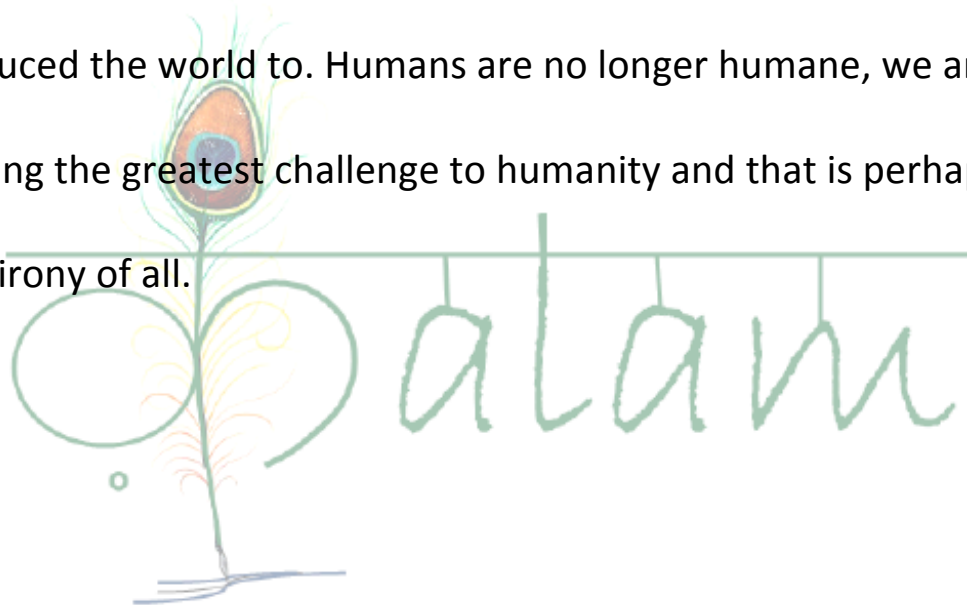
It is understood that it is human nature to put our own needs above those of others but the question we need to ask is, to what extent is this viable? When we refer to the word 'people' it brings with it a sense of individuality, a sense of humanity, of being humane and yet, our actions imply otherwise.



People have become slaves, not of our governments but to quote 'The Eagles' of our own devices. Doesn't this phrase 'the thing you own ends up owning you' suddenly become so much more profound as we grow older? Isn't that a sign that refers to a paradox, to the irony which will finally be the end of us? This slavery to devices has another adverse affect. People become self-centered to such a great extent that they will support anything that favors their beliefs and reject everything that might potentially come in their way, even if it might cause discomfort to others. The word 'people' not only suggests but also presupposes a

kind of humanity, a kind of individuality, but then why has it become so hard to prove, illustrate?

This is what the world has come to. This is what we believe. We live among people and choose to kill other people. It is no longer enough to be repulsed by this; we need to be ashamed of what we have reduced the world to. Humans are no longer humane, we are, in fact, posing the greatest challenge to humanity and that is perhaps the greatest irony of all.



The Rewarding Ache

-Vernika Tanwani

"I'm so fed up of this now!" said Mr. S as another lump of flesh rolled out of his skin and landed upon the wooden base. He had been enduring torture for a very long time now. For years, the old man he lived with had constantly been drubbing, thrashing, beating and whacking him. Mr. S had absolutely no idea as to why the old man did what he did to him but it was unbearably painful. All day and all night, he would just scrape off his skin with all the instruments available. Hot iron, cold metal, and drills would untiringly work upon his body leaving him with a burning ache. At times, his distaste for the man would show on his face, but then the old fellow would scrape off the frown and plant a smile instead.

This went on for years before it finally stopped forever. There came a day when the old man, looking as though he felt utterly satisfied, flashed a grin so large that it extended from one ear to another, and stopped his gruesome acts. Mr. S was left wondering what was wrong with the old man. He then delicately wrapped Mr. S in the finest fabric he had and took him to a large place where millions of people gathered to just look at him.

"What mastery, what craftsmanship!" "Oh you're such a fine artist, sir!" "Such skilled carving!" people would look completely amazed when their fine eyes would scan Mr. S' body. Mr. S felt delighted now. This was the happiest time of his life. He was living his dream and this was all after years of endurance, after all that pain, after years of the old man's work. He now understood what the old fellow was doing. What he interpreted as being a sadistic act was actually necessary for bringing him into this form. Without all that pain, he would just have been a log of wood. Mr. S, that is, Mr. Statue, realized

the value of all the thrashing. His perpetual aching was not wasted. He understood the secret of life- sometimes you may feel broken, shattered, smashed and ruptured but all those blows shape you into the best possible version of yourself.

A small, handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to be the initials 'MKC', is centered on the page.

Juvenile Delinquency

-Akankshya Rath

The current scenario of India poses a big challenge to the society. The utmost reason for juveniles going astray is careless parenting, lack of communication between the parents and their children, and the negative impact of social media on the mental processes of children.

Nowadays, teenagers are extremely enthusiastic to stay up to date with minute things, starting from a model in an advertisement on television to a murder that recently occurred. In India, the rate of crimes committed by juveniles is much higher than in any other and the primary cause for this is the lack of education and knowledge.

One specific sensitive area of curiosity for the young is sexuality.

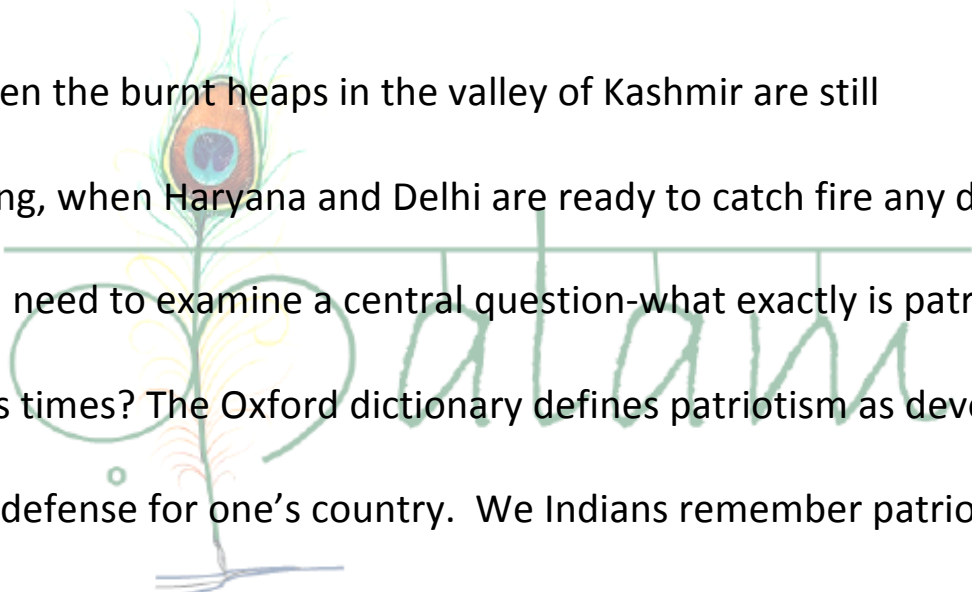
Sex education is an essential aspect that each and every individual must

be educated about. It is because of lack of sex education that the rate of sexual crimes among the juveniles is increasing day by day. It is during adolescence that teenagers should get proper knowledge and guidance from their parents and elders; otherwise they become more susceptible to imbibing the wrong stereotypes or falling in bad company. Sex crimes have become common among juveniles. They are greatly attracted to it because of lack of knowledge and ultimately they land up in sticky situations.

In the recent past, the question of juvenile delinquency has been prominent due to the anger surrounding the Nirbhaya case. However, it's an extremely sensitive question with multiple aspects – the role of the judiciary and other government institutions in the rehabilitation, correction of juveniles, the question of social awareness and of social conditioning. It's a matter that must be discussed dispassionately.

Patriotism Needs To Be Redefined!

-Aratrika Bose



When the burnt heaps in the valley of Kashmir are still smoldering, when Haryana and Delhi are ready to catch fire any day, there is a need to examine a central question-what exactly is patriotism in today's times? The Oxford dictionary defines patriotism as devoted love and defense for one's country. We Indians remember patriotism when there is an India-Pakistan cricket match or when a terrorist bombs the trains. But where does that patriotism go when we litter the roads, when men rape the women of our own country, when our own leaders are bound by corruption and so on?

I venture to suggest that the true meaning of patriotism should be a true sense of responsibility that is not short or frenzied by outbursts

of emotions. Most people's idea of patriotism is shaped by the beliefs of conservative communities, overridden with emotions and it comes with a constant need to blame someone. All the people who bomb cities in the name of terrorism, all the countries who fight wars sending their soldiers to endless battles in the name of patriotism, like our situation in Jammu and Kashmir at present, if these people see what war does to the young minds and bodies, if they stand over the mangled corpses of killed children and listen to their the wails of their parents, they would not be able to repeat the clichés they use to justify their constant fights in the name of honor. The point is not to be anti-war but to choose our battles carefully in a time of limited resources and sacred lives. Above all, the point is to redefine patriotism and what we choose to do in its name.

Let me state a fresh example. July 26 was Kargil divas. For those who don't know, on this day, 16 years ago in 1999, our soldiers won the Kargil war enduring the cold weather and protecting us from the

destructive ripples it could have created. On that same day, BJP politician K Laxman called Sania Mirza, a Pakistani daughter-in-law, and not local enough to be appointed Indian brand ambassador for Telangana. It's sad that our leader chose to speak on the latter which is so insignificant as compared to the former. If only he had said a few words about Kargil divas it would have resulted in awareness for the general public, as many people are not aware of the noble sacrifice our army made 16 years ago. Instead he chose to humiliate a fellow Indian who has won such respect for our country just because she is married to a Pakistani.

In the end, it's all about which road we choose to walk down in the name of 'love for our country', for this love and support is being misled and misdirected. As George Bernard Shaw said- "You will never have a quiet world till you knock the patriotism out of the human race". And indeed patriotism needs to be redefined and love needs to be readjusted. Emotions need to be replaced with responsibility for our

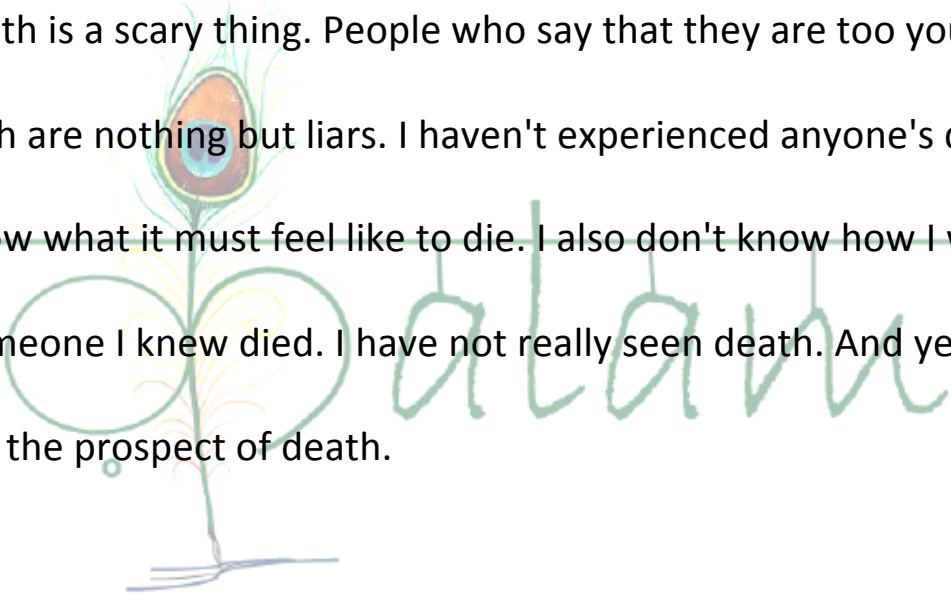
country and hatred needs to be replaced with honesty towards our fellow men. We should aim to follow the laws of our country, educate our young, take strict action against crime, stand against corruption, not litter the roads and keep our country clean inside and out. I think that's how our country will truly progress and to be a part of such a progress is true patriotism. Don't you think so?



An Empty Space No More Empty

– Mahima Kapoor

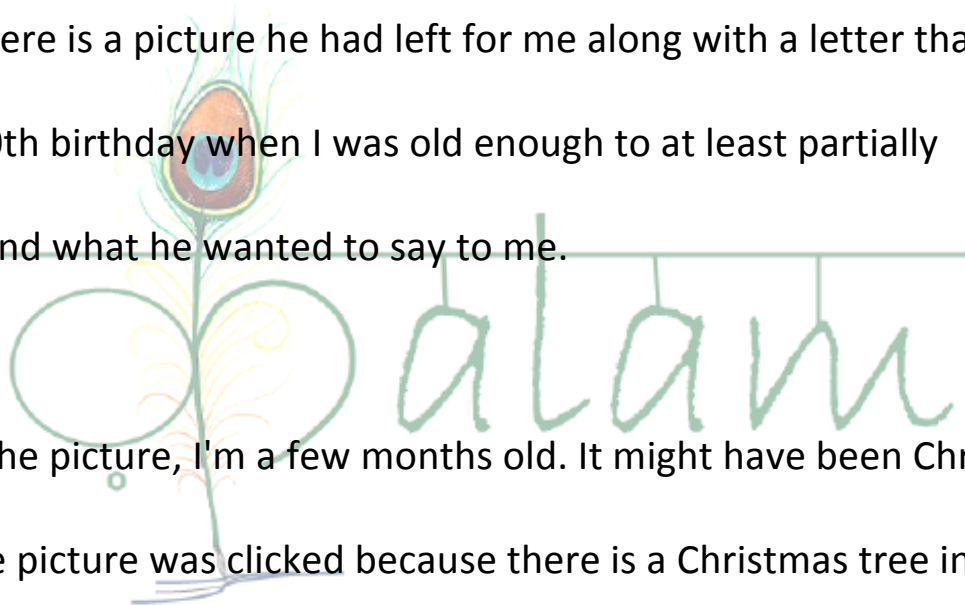
Death is a scary thing. People who say that they are too young to fear death are nothing but liars. I haven't experienced anyone's death. I don't know what it must feel like to die. I also don't know how I would feel if someone I knew died. I have not really seen death. And yet I am scared of the prospect of death.



I think it's the easiest for those who don't see death coming. But for the people they were loved by it must be the hardest thing ever. However, I cannot comprehend what must be going on in the minds of those who know that they are going to die. Do they feel fear? Or do they just surrender to death? Do the people who lose them get

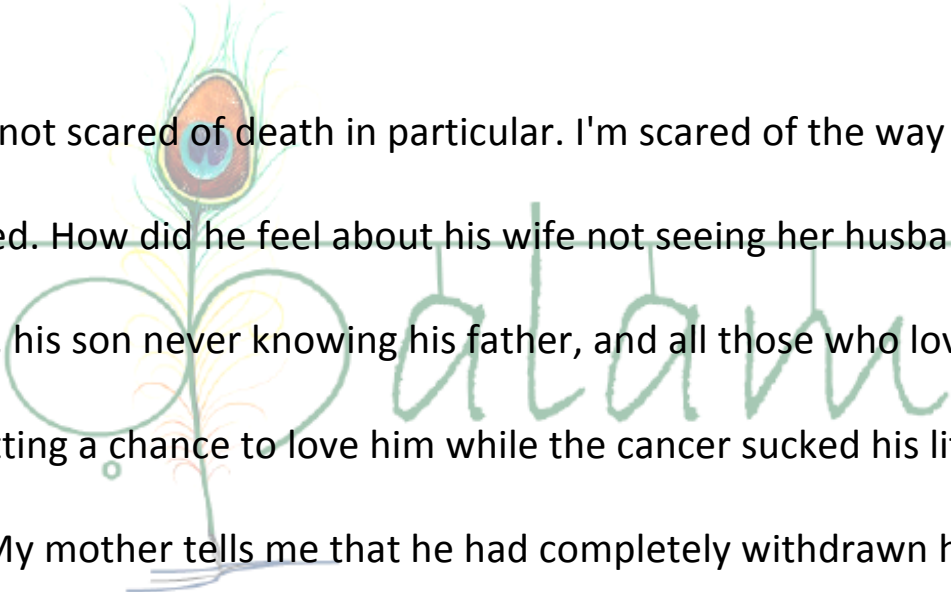
accustomed to the idea after a while? Do they learn how to hide the pain? I do not know.

For me, death is a sore reminder of my father. I didn't get a chance to know him. He died of cancer even before I could learn to crawl. There is a picture he had left for me along with a letter that I got on my 10th birthday when I was old enough to at least partially understand what he wanted to say to me.



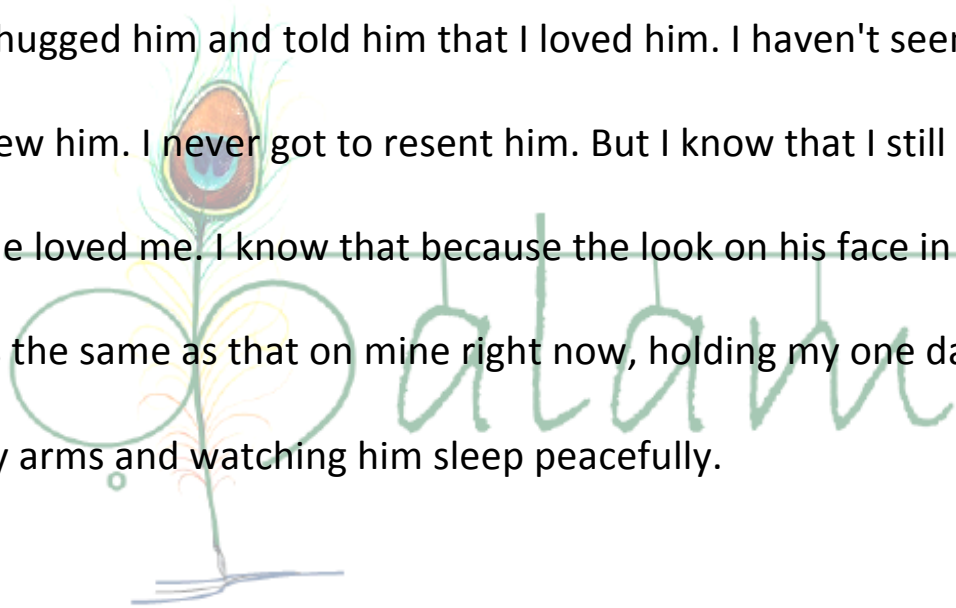
In the picture, I'm a few months old. It might have been Christmas when the picture was clicked because there is a Christmas tree in the room. The room is bright yellow and maroon with a window on the wall painted yellow. There's a piano right next to the Christmas tree. My father is holding me with what seems like a firm yet loving grasp. His eyes are cast down on me and the expression on his face tells me that by this time he knew the cancer will swallow him whole. I look like I'm trying to get away from his hands. Even today when I see the picture, I

cannot help but wonder what it would have felt like had he held me like that now, certainly not as he was holding me when I was a baby, but in an equally loving embrace. I'm sure I would not have tried to get away from him. But then again, if there was no cancer and no death, I probably would have.



I'm not scared of death in particular. I'm scared of the way my father died. How did he feel about his wife not seeing her husband anymore, his son never knowing his father, and all those who loved him never getting a chance to love him while the cancer sucked his life out of him? My mother tells me that he had completely withdrawn himself from the world by the time his end came nearer and nearer. In fact, my mother also saw him only a handful of times before he died. The chemotherapy was too much for him. Add to it the fear of death. However, she says that she's not sure if he was afraid of dying or afraid of abandoning us.

When I was in school, I saw many children resenting their fathers. I used to think them ungrateful. But when I actually thought about it, I realized that if I had not lost my father, I would've been resenting him at some point in my life too. And after a few days of silence, akin to the ones other kids participated in with their parents, I would've gone to him and hugged him and told him that I loved him. I haven't seen him. I never knew him. I never got to resent him. But I know that I still love him. As he loved me. I know that because the look on his face in the picture is the same as that on mine right now, holding my one day old son in my arms and watching him sleep peacefully.



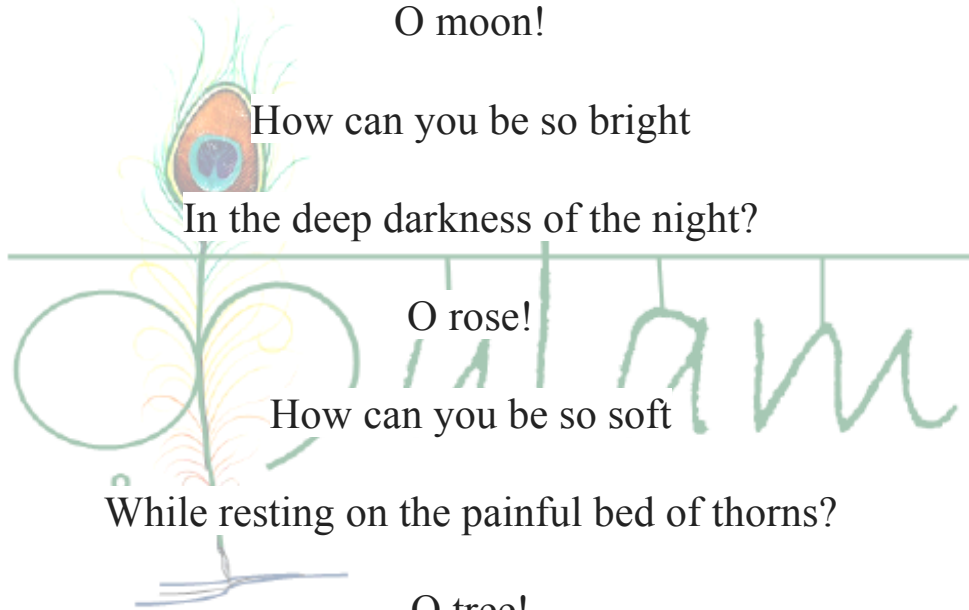
Nature versus Man

-Siddhi Jangid

O moon!

How can you be so bright

In the deep darkness of the night?



O rose!

How can you be so soft

While resting on the painful bed of thorns?

O tree!

How can you be a selfless giver

When everyone in the world just takes and takes?

O stars!

How can you stay up so high and so far

When there is always a fear of falling?

O Sun!

How can you lighten the sky

When you yourself are burning inside?

O sky!

How can you give shelter to us all

When you too have tears that fall?

O earth!

How can you care for everyone's home

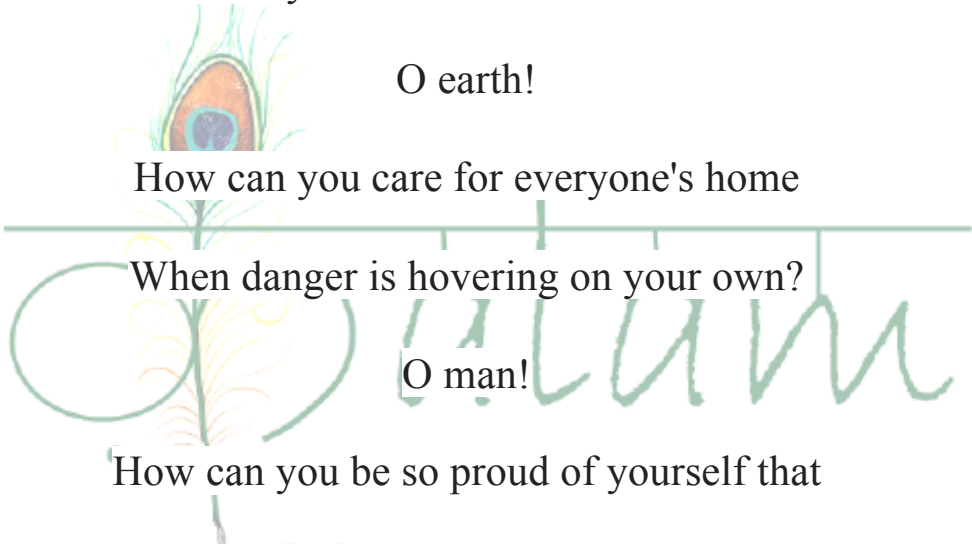
When danger is hovering on your own?

O man!

How can you be so proud of yourself that

When so many are doing so much for you

You do nothing for them?



FAILURES - Stepping stones in disguise

- Disha Mehta

Distressing is the thought,

Repentance it has brought.

My first failure

Got me wounds that need to be cured.

Inconceivable is the agony of

The heart that bleeds

And now sows new seeds -

Some are seeds of obsession,

Others of perseverance.

All of it, however, has only driven me to look

At my aim without even a single blink,
And I'm going to succeed at it by hook or by crook.
Now failure is my pen & perseverance will be my ink.

And here I am, all set to write a new story -
The story of my triumphs, the story of my glory.
Today was the test that's about to go,
And in its wake my credence wouldn't disappear.

What we strive for, we'll surely achieve.
Failures are the best stepping stones, I believe.
The only mantra is to not lose hope,
For hope itself broadens every scope.

What Social Anxiety Means

– Mahima Kapoor

When I say that I won't be able to make it today, I mean to say,
I'm sorry I can't come see you, but believe me, I really want to,
But it's just too hard today, and you probably won't get it if I tell
You that on some days I just can't get out of my bed and that on
Some days it is impossible for me to step a foot out of the door
Of my house, and that on some days it's all I can do to feel some
Semblance of normalcy, because while I would love to breathe in
The air that you breathe, and I would love to soak in the rays of the
Sun that only seems to be shining for you, and I would love to see
You after all this time, I would still feel like there's asphalt in my
Body that has changed from its thick, black, sticky form to the

Hardened residue left under the effect of the ice that burns in my
Veins when I wouldn't know how to interact with someone, and I
Know you won't understand when I say all of that instead of some
Excuse I have come up with just to spare you the unnecessary
Details of what it means to have sudden spurts of social anxiety.

