



ISSUE #3

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Story From the Hospital Ward	2
Crimson Ecstasy	3
To Those Who Dreamt	4
More Than Scars	5
Highlights	6
	7
From Abandoned Notebooks	8
Our Big Fat Pakistani Families	9
A Lesson Learnt	
Dear Mom	10
Once in A Millennium	11
The Truth About the Truth	
Message from the Editorial Team	12

SCHOOL IN THE STREET  
THE JUSTUJU PROJECT



BY FAYZA SALMAN  
(X-B)

Externally, Azam Basti – located near Phase 1, Karachi- hardly seems like the sort of place where dreams come true; it is the sort of place where even the hope of getting educated has to strive against all odds. Superficially a breeding ground for drug-addicts –where the streets are paved with misery–it is also a home to young, bleary-eyed men and eager, playful children.

Six years ago, Azam Basti was described in the media as a place where ‘young people are lured into taking drugs because they have little else to do.’ A year later, in 2011, the Justuju School opened its doors to the residents of the indigent neighbourhood; offering education to the young inhabitants of this community for Rs. 200 per month.

The Justuju Welfare Organization in Karachi was established by Maha Masood, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Masood Alam, and her friends - all A level students of Nixor College. Having a passion for social work, they wished to make a difference by providing quality education to underprivileged children, in an effort to reboot the education sector.

The achievements of the Justuju School can be clearly seen with the dramatic change in its students’ lives. Abdullah, a daily-wage labourer with a meagre income, is a resident of Azam Basti along with his

family of six. He never expected to be able to send his children to school or provide them with a solid educational foundation. However, today, his four-year-old daughter has risen to the top of her class at the Justuju School, and is known for her punctuality and excellent memory.

For the students, according to the *Express Tribune*; the school is a welcome relief:

“I love painting and playing with friends here,” says a 7-year-old student.

“I love wearing the Justuju uniform!” exclaims another student, for whom homework is not a chore. “I have to help my mother at home, but I have grown to love school so much that I always manage to find time for my studies.”

The Justuju team has also created an environment where children are eager to spend their time. A four-year-old explains, “I thought grown-ups were people who yelled at you and were angry all the time. But then, I came here to Justuju and everyone is so nice; I want to come here every day.”

Today, the Justuju School stands as the epitome of goodwill, determination, and a little tenacity on the initiators’ part. It is a reminder of how the key to the betterment of our homeland lies within us- we simply have to extract it and turn the lock.

*For more information and to volunteer, you may visit the following links:*  
[www.Justuju.org](http://www.Justuju.org)  
<https://facebook.com/justuju/>

## RED

BY MARYAM JABBAR  
(IX-D)

II

Red" they said "a warm and positive colour." However they forgot anger, hatred, rage, blood, yet love is what red is. Red was the colour that brought me life, and red was what shattered my very existence. Red was what I was when he came and red was what I saw when he left. It was the invisible little red thread of destiny that made us meet or was it the famous ol' cupid's red arrow? It was what I felt when I had my first panic attack. It was the fear of living in this messed up world. It was the love that destroyed me. It was the fire raging within me. It was the fire that destroyed the happy family. It was the colour that brought me hope but hope was the worst weapon to murder. It was what I saw when I used the razors and it is what I'm made of. It was the colour of my lips as I put my mask up. It was the colour that pierced the atmosphere when I screamed my lungs out. It was colour of my eyes after a night of weeping. It was the first colour when Autumn came and the last colour as the sun drowned once again. It was the colour of the rivers that course through my body. It was the colour that surrounded me when the knife went deeper. It was the last thing I saw before I closed my eyes. It was the kind of cold than burned a whole lot hotter than a flame. Maybe it was the state of my mind or maybe it was the first colour in my black and white life.

## A STORY FROM THE HOSPITAL WARD

BY ZOYA ZEESHAN  
(IX-C)

I clearly remember the moment: I was sitting in the hospital, staring blankly at the doctor, trying to comprehend what she had just said. I tried to speak, to ask, "Am I going to die?", but all that came out was a whisper, barely even demanding a reply, scared as I was of it. Mom had tears streaming down her face, eyes bloodshot. I looked my Dad in the eye and saw how shattered he was, how much it strained him to see his daughter in pain, and to not be able to do anything about it.

I excused myself and got out, desperately longing for some fresh air. My Dad started to come after me, but I suppose the doctor stopped him- thankfully. Getting out of the building, I roamed about, the fresh air helping me think things through. The words kept repeating in my head, over and over again; I looked up to the sky and whispered, "I have cancer..." the words getting lost in the wind. My eyes welled up with tears, just one word on my lips "Why?!"

Once inside, I simply stood in front of the doctor, nodding dumbly to whatever she said. The biggest blow was when she told me I could not go to school while I underwent chemotherapy. My mom squeezed my hand hard. On reaching home, I rushed to my aunt, hugging her ever so tightly. We were like sisters, having an age gap of just seven years. I was glad she was there because I knew she would understand my feelings. I abruptly began crying my eyes out, letting myself falling apart.

"Hey, it's okay. You're not alone, we're all in this together, alright?"

I looked up at her and said, "But... I have cancer... I'm going to die"- the word 'cancer' barely a whisper.

"So what? Aren't you a fighter? The person who wants to join the army? If you aren't strong, how will you do so?" I hugged her again, realizing what she had said was true. But it still could not set everything right.

A week later, I was admitted into the hospital for treatment. My dad had requested a private room for me, but in the evening, due to lack of personnel, I was shifted to the general ward. Now this meant I had to share a room with five

other people. A silent complaint escaped my lips- why was everything supposed to happen to me only? For the first two days, I insisted on keeping the curtains down around my bed, but on the third day, Mom chose to ignore my protests and draw them back. The ward was filled with kids diagnosed with cancer- one of them stood chances of battling it out through chemotherapy. The other three- one of whom had been under treatment for the past three years, and another, in the last stages of cancer- would probably not survive.

"What about me, Mom? Will I be okay?" I asked. She stared at me for a moment before replying, "You have the most fortunate case of cancer; it's completely curable. You're lucky it was diagnosed at the initial stage only." I was doubtful she was only saying it to comfort me, but I allowed the relief to wash over me. I was not going to die after all.

And then I realized how ungrateful I had been- these kids who were barely older than ten years were even worse off than I was, deprived of the moments they were supposed to be enjoying, time spent with friends, time spent in school. I, on the other hand, was incredibly fortunate- and as if to prove a point, fate brought me within an inch of my life and then yanked me back into the world again. Where my memory failed me, my mother told me how, at about one in the morning, when the nurse came for my hourly checkup, my heart rate was a bit low, but everyone assumed it was just because I was asleep. However, all of a sudden, my heart beat dropped tremendously, from sixty eight to sixty. Then fifty eight. Fifty four. Fifty two. The nurses quickly pulled out my bed and rushed me to the ICU. Meanwhile, my heart rate continued falling, eventually stabilizing around forty beats per minute. My mother thought I was done for. I woke up around eleven in the morning, in my room, with a crowd of relatives huddled around my bed.

It was then that I learnt how we never truly realize the worth of what we do have, while being so occupied in lamenting over the trivialities that we do not have. To be able to live a life of privilege is a blessing we often disregard- not to mention the countless relatives and friends who care for us and love us and support us, albeit by turns, through every chapter of our life.

# CRIMSON ECSTASY

By ROMESA QAZI  
(X-B)

It is my unshakable belief that I must not have been a good baby in my mother's womb. Call it a preposterous theory, yet it seems as if God had decided to infuse a rotten disability as a punishing action onto my existence. Schizophrenia, they say to me. They taunt me with this word, which seems to roll off my tongue like an insensible locution. They call me insane, a victim of something dark and incurable; they reject my excuses; they call me wicked. Now is the time to tell my tale in words, although not pure, yet, undeniably true. This is my chance at redemption; to make them understand what they claim is diabolical.

It had been a night of hatching evils and awakening mischief. As I walked along the sidewalk of Fleet Street, my chest an overwhelming case of fear and my mind engrossed in turmoil of strange voices, I saw each house cloaked in a deadly silent darkness - only punctured by dimly lit lanterns covered in a layer of London dirt. I was satisfied; this was my realm. I could do anything; I was free. Soon, however, impatience began to take control, the voices inside my head began to scream, and walking seemed to last forever. The crunching sound of the dead leaves echoed in the street, the wooden doors creaked due to the heavy wailing winds; the screeching sound of my feet colliding with the ground seemed to get louder and louder. Feeling a rush inside me, a mixture of nervousness and excitement, I had realized I was ready to do something absurd - something nasty.

Then something happened. I felt a living force following me. Fear revolved all over, my spine froze. I could see the shadow of the person walking behind me. Not wanting to turn around, not wanting to look at

my follower, I increased my pace; yet it had seemed impossible to create a distance between our shadows; the unknown being was now underneath my skin, his presence rippling through the bubble of my most personal insecurities. I had slowly started to look up, convincing myself that everything was going to be alright; however, the hallucinations had now completely taken over, ruling every ability of mine, and being in command of every tiny nerve in my body. I was not myself anymore. The wind started to blow harder, hitting my face mercilessly, forcing the trees to sway their leaves with full energy. The mailboxes of the houses now started to creak; the wooden houses creaked in unison. I was caught up in a place where the worlds of madness, excitement and fear overlapped beautifully, and I enjoyed my deranged state.

Gray figures moved around me, and I had embraced them as my friends; my allies. They had always believed in me when others did not, and so I welcomed them. I laughed and giggled as they followed me, heeding to what they said. Kill it, they whispered. Kill what? I thought, feeling merely confused.

Then I saw it. That white cat, its eyes glaring at me. I had gotten angry. How dare it look at me that way! Slowly, I pulled out a sharp butcher's knife out of my cloak, the one my father uses every Sunday after church at the fishing docks. The blade slashed through open air; a whiz that my eyes couldn't register had made the cat yell painfully, spreading exhilaration through my conscience.

It was time to go home and tell Martha what I had done. She would be so proud! I thought happily. I carried the bleeding, limp cat back home.

Upon reaching home, I looked through our window; watch-

ing her sit there on a rocking chair whilst she sewed a corset, her face calm and collected. Smiling lopsidedly, I banged on the door.

She opened it and to my astonishment, she was not happy. Why? I thought, bewildered. She gave out a small yelp, and pulled me inside.

"What have you done, silly girl?" She cried. A second later, I was struck on my right cheek.

She'd never hit me before. Tears were rolling off of my cheeks. I had done it again. I had disappointed her. Again.

"I'm sorry," My voice broke through the barrier of my own saliva and shame. She came to hug me, not taking note of my blood spattered clothes. It felt so good to envelop her in my arms, feel the coldness of the evil leave and only warmth sink in my bones.

Whilst I sunk the knife into her back.

## PROCRASTINATORS UNITE!



## O HOMELAND!

BY AREESHA SAIF (IX-B)

Lying still in its greenery yet  
Rushing after its dreams fast,  
Capital centre of the mighty heart.  
Islamabad's royalty bears witness;  
O' homeland! You are the most  
special of all.  
Labouring each day to bring out  
gifts of the Creator,  
Sweating on to feed mouths of over  
a 180 million.  
Lost in vegetation, decorated in its  
fruit.  
Sindh's determination bears wit-  
ness;  
O' homeland! You are the most  
special of all.  
Proud of its culture, distinct from  
all,  
Blooming in lush vegetation, the  
city of flowers.  
Standing grand is the architecture  
of history and its wonders.  
Peshawar's differentiation bears  
witness;  
O' homeland! You are the most  
special of all.  
Buried in effort, vast in culture,  
The desert wind rages on with its  
grandeur.  
Touched by turmoil, yet strong.  
Quetta's strength bears witness;  
O' homeland! You are the most  
special of all.  
Dressed in the winter's snowy en-  
chantment,  
Accessorized by the rising moun-  
tains.  
Divided, yet a part of us.  
Kashmir's panorama bears wit-  
ness;  
O' homeland! You are the most  
special of all.  
Drunk on passion,  
Full of hope and resolve to do bet-  
ter,  
Unmatchable and unique.  
A Pakistani's heart bears witness;  
O' homeland! You are the most  
special of all.  
For no reason, except that you are  
home.  
There's no place as comfortable as  
you.

## TO THOSE WHO DREAMT

BY HANIYA FARRUKH  
(X-B)

Existing in a world where every-  
one is too caught up in a flurry of  
activities has made us oblivious to  
the fact, that people are so much  
more than we make them out to  
be. They have ambitions and pas-  
sions, accompanied by wishful  
longings. At an age such as ours,  
almost everyone has thought of the  
direction that they want to follow in  
life. However, what we fail to real-  
ise, is that we interact on almost a  
daily basis with people who have  
lived the portion of life which we  
deem as the 'scary unknown.'  
Those are our teachers.

Being human means want-  
ing to pursue whatever attracts our  
interest, which brings to mind sev-  
eral questions; what of those  
teachers whose goal was not to  
teach? Who dreamed of roaming  
among the stars and painting them  
and writing of them? Every time  
they step into their classrooms,  
and see fresh faces coupled with  
unbroken spirits and bold ambi-  
tions, what runs through their  
mind? Perhaps it is a bright, burn-  
ing hope for them to succeed in  
life, or maybe even a twinge of  
wistfulness that these young ones  
still have a shot at life, and are not  
bound by circumstances. To an-  
swer some of these questions, I  
took to asking some of my teach-  
ers about their ambitions. "I want-  
ed to go for engineering," an-  
swered one teacher, "but due to  
certain reasons, I was prevented  
from doing so. However, I am im-  
mensely pleased with this job and  
could not ask for anything bet-  
ter." "My aim was to become an  
artist," another teacher says. "It  
was my greatest desire to pursue  
this, but my mother's wish for me  
to become a doctor led me down a  
different path. I do regret not mak-

ing more of an effort and feel wist-  
ful at times, but I truly am satisfied  
with teaching."

Wanting to know more, I  
asked a teacher how she felt to-  
wards students. For her, dealing  
with each mind eager to learn  
proves to be a worthy experience.  
"Teaching grants me the oppor-  
tunity to face different challenges,  
and it is delightful when students  
approach me years later," she  
says with a smile. These interac-  
tions helped me see teachers in a  
different light, and made me real-  
ise how once upon a time, they too  
were youths with bridges to cross  
and mountains to climb.

For one teacher, her ambi-  
tion in life has already been ful-  
filled. "I wished to study literature  
and succeeded at doing so. In  
fact, even now I am teaching and  
studying simultaneously. Doing  
what I am passionate about has  
taught me the importance of work-  
ing hard even in the face of obsta-  
cles, just in order to achieve some-  
thing worthwhile."

Going over the above  
words gives rise to a plethora of  
emotions and thoughts, one of  
them being that some regrets nev-  
er truly fade away, simply lurking  
at the back of minds and coming  
forth at slight beckoning. However,  
the feeling of hope manages to  
dominate all; hope, that even if we  
are forced to abandon our ambi-  
tions due to some twist of fate,  
happiness will not disappear from  
our lives. Through patience and  
time consuming efforts, wounds do  
manage to heal, leaving no mark  
behind as if they never existed in  
the first place. Every dream is  
worth pursuing, and if we are  
somehow nudged to follow anoth-  
er path, then it is imperative to re-  
member that there is always a light  
at the end of the tunnel. Better  
days always come, and our teach-  
ers are examples of that.

## MORE THAN SCARS

BY LAIBA SIDDIQI  
(XI-B)

Despite being featured in a particular Oscar-winning documentary by our very own Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, the issue of acid attacks is one that we've fictionalized or cast under the rug. It's something that happens in far-off places, generally slums, and to other people, generally illiterate. Reality check - they happen everywhere, in cities and towns, and even in so-called 'educated' neighbourhoods, the major driving force behind them being intolerance - also found everywhere - whether it be religious bias, professional jealousies, gang violence, marital or property disputes. Julie Aftab, 16, had battery acid sprayed in her face when a man walked into the office where she worked, asked if she was a Christian, and her reply came in the affirmative. Then grabbed her by the hair, and forced it down her throat, burning her oesophagus. Bushra, the youngest of her siblings and daughter of a labourer, was attacked by Javed, who lived in her neighbourhood and frequently harassed her about marriage. Upon the refusal of the marriage proposal by Bushra and her family, Javed threw acid on Bushra's face, which damaged her right eye and the right side of her face.

A common misconception is that acid attacks are a male-to-female form of gender violence, when in reality, 20% of acid burn victims are men. Take for instance, Iqbal, who danced at marriage processions and at the age of 15, had a bottle of acid emptied over his head when he rejected the sexual advances of a man. Even children end up being collateral prey in most attacks. And as far as perpetrators go, women form a significant percentage, which totally contradicts the stereotype.

We often undermine the real damage that acid attacks do, thinking it's all about looks. But acid burn victims have to deal with medical complications all their lives: blindness, deaf-

ness, corrosion of organs, inhalation problems due to melted cartilage, as well as subsequent infections, not to mention psychological trauma, high levels of anxiety and social ostracism. Zaib, ten, suffers each day - she always keeps a pink shawl draped over her head and doesn't want anyone — not even her family — to see her face. She can't see, and her throat remains badly swollen, so she only eats soup, or bread dipped in milk or tea to soften it. There are days when she tells her family she no longer wants to live, and days when she sobs and begs for someone to turn back time.

But the worst part is, that most never see justice. The Pakistani judicial system is not one that favours the wronged - victims are discouraged from speaking out, the police force itself indulges in crime it ought to be preventing, witnesses are easily bribed by the perpetrator, and judges simply seek to close the case rather than honour the law. This is the system that let Bilal Khar get away. An MPA, he was the son of Mustafa Khar, coming from an influential, landowning family. After abusing his wife, Fakhra Younus, he had acid poured over her when she ran away to her mother's place. Khar was acquitted at trial while Younus ended up committing suicide in Rome after undergoing 38 surgeries.

At the end of the day, acid attacks remind us how we have failed as a society. One may accuse the government of not doing enough, not regulating the sale of alcohol properly, not being committed to enforcing the law. But the problem lies at the very core of our thinking - how we have failed to distinguish violence even as a form of itself, failed to create an environment of security, empathy, and forbearance, and failed to teach each other the proper way of resolving disputes. Above all, failed to respect life, and preserve the liberty that each person is entitled to.

## ODYSSEY OF THE DEPRIVED

BY HIBA RIZVI (X-B)

Gazing up at the sky at night I sometimes wonder what life must be like devoid of salty water and hunger.

The soggy, wet pillow under my head is testimony enough

to assure my malnutrition of golden hands and fluff. Linger over the trinkets and trifles of the rich

yet compelled to prevent my eyes from revealing their hitch,

buffeted by the wealthy and leered at by the men endeavoring hard to ensnare me within their den.

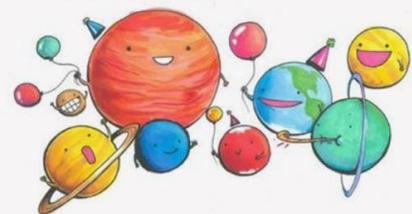
Tattered fabric is what I call my home, encompassed since birth in poverty-stricken foam.

Murky water and ditches haunt my dreams while humanity terrifies me more than blood curdling screams.

Closing my eyes, I leave behind my withering life, withered further by my starvation of everything nice,

lying on my deathbed, I am finally happy to be finally bereft of everything scrappy.

HOW DO YOU ORGANIZE  
A SPACE PARTY?



YOU PLANET.



27TH  
SEPTEMBER  
2016





A heated competition ensued on 24th October 2016 at the Scrabble Tournament when students from classes VI to XI went head-to-head, in their respective categories, for the prestigious Scrabble Cup which was won by Areesha Saif of IX-B.



The Annual Newspaper Drive was held from 1st November to 7th November, during which students from each house enthusiastically contributed bundles of newspapers to lead their house to victory. After a week full of immense hard work, the Pochaji House emerged victorious.



FROM ABANDONED NOTEBOOKS

AS I WATCH YOU GO THROUGH ROUTINE MOMENTS, PLAYING WITH YOUR WORDS, LOOKING AT ME BETWEEN SECONDS OF STRETCHED TENSION; ALL I CAN THINK OF IS HOW I COULD BE SO MUCH CLOSER TO YOU THAN I AM RIGHT NOW.

ZEHRA SHABİR KİHAN  
(X-B)

WE BELONG TOGETHER; AND WHEN I SAY THAT I MEAN THAT YOU'RE THE SAME FABRIC AS ME, THAT YOUR EXISTENCE AND MINE IS MADE UP OF THE SAME VIBRATING ATOMS. IN A CONSTELLATION ABOUT TEN BILLION LIGHT YEARS AWAY, A STAR ACTS AS THE CONNECTING JUNCTION OF YOUR FATE AND MINE. WE COEXIST AS AN AESTHETIC ARRANGEMENT OF FATES IN A FUTURE WE WON'T LIVE TO SEE.

THE CELLS BUILDING ME UP WILL ALWAYS SOMEHOW YEARN FOR THOSE MAKING YOU. SO WHEN I SAY WE BELONG TOGETHER, I AM REFERRING TO THAT MOMENT YOU CATCH ME SMILING AT YOU AND I CATCH YOU STARING AT ME. THE THING ABOUT US IS THAT WE HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FROM BEFORE THIS. WE HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS.

SO LISTEN TO ME WHEN I SAY WE BELONG TOGETHER. IT'S TRUE THAT IT HURTS KNOWING THAT FOREVER IS JUST A MIRAGE ON THE SANDS OF TIME AND THAT ONE DAY ALL THAT WILL BE LEFT OF US IS YOU AND ME BUT YOU HAPPENED TO BE PART OF MY STORY TEN BILLION YEARS BEFORE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO AND MANAGED TO STAY FOR SO LONG.

NOW THAT YOU'RE LEAVING TO MEET ME AN ETERNITY AFTER, LEAVE THE LIGHT SWITCHED ON AND THE MUSIC BLARING SO I CAN WRITE AND PRETEND I CAN'T HEAR ME CRY. AND WHEN YOU RETURN, YOU'LL FIND ME RIGHT HERE WITH MY PEN AND A STACK OF ETERNITY OLD PEN MARKS ON YELLOWED SCRAPS OF MEMORIES.

When walls collapse, a torrent of screams shatter the still air, hearts broken, dreams uprooted, life itself wailing in agony futilely attempting to reincarnate a bloated corpse with dank, empty eyes invaded death. The walls, immovable, unstoppable, unconquerable, burying all chaos within. Silence reigns again, momentary peace, quiet prayers, and forlorn eyes staring at a grave. Leaders in impeccably tailored suits firmly embrace a life of hypocrisy and lies, sign a mere face stating "PEACE TALKS ESTABLISHED" while a girl clutches a doll staring at the place her father used to recline, waiting..

A lion struggles in a pool of dark liquid, agony in the demeanour of the King of the Jungle, as a boot steps out to look upon its depleting glory, intent to rip out its fur and make garments for Man's elite shoulders. A seal thrashes, trying with no avail to shatter its net prison. Fear storms in its eyes as brown hands tug it out, and a huge, shiny object is the last thing it sees.

Trees wail for mercy, can't the barbarians hear them plead? No, ferns and mosses and leaves and cones crush under a mighty bulldozer, go into a processing system and come out a brand-new polished chair, reserved for selling at high prices.

Exhaust fumes discolour the air, the sky coughs and chokes, but the purr of the machines in a factory continue to spew contaminants. Waste chemicals penetrate into a glistening pond, killing a baby fish that mistakenly swallows it.

The bombs fall, huge pellets of destruction blasting everything in their way. A body drops, bloodied, vacant eyes and annihilated dreams falling to the earth, shattering into splinters among the rocks.

Several highly shined shoes march upright, carrying a coffin displayed with pride over their shoulders, as the national anthem blares and all stand to attention and salute a flag. Meanwhile, a mother waits in vain for her tall son to come home and reclaim his place there.

A long time later, Man stands, his bearing and attitude that was previously erect and proud is now slumped, visualising the Earth he destroyed, the lives he quelled, the dreams he uprooted till all that was left of a magical sprightly planet turned into wasted blood, desolate soil, solitary dreams and piles of rubble.

When the walls have collapsed, we will stand there viewing what we have done; remorse, regret and agony consuming us, but then alas, it would be too late.

FATİMA SARFARAZ  
(IX-A)

PAIN SEARED THROUGH MY ARM, WHERE YOU LEFT A BURN FROM YOUR LIT CIGARETTE. YOU LAUGH AND I SMILE, TEARS FORMING IN MY EYES. YOU DID IT AGAIN, I LET YOU DO IT AGAIN, I CRIED MYSELF TO SLEEP AND THE NEXT DAY, YOU LEFT. YOU CHOKED MY SOBS WITH THAT BRUISED FIST OF YOURS UNTIL MY CRIES WERE MUFFLED, AND THE ONLY WITNESSES OF MY SUFFERING WERE THE EMPTY WALLS AROUND ME. YOU ROUGHLY PUSH ME AND BANG MY HEAD AGAINST THEM REPEATEDLY, UNTIL THE PAIN NUMBS INTO A DULL THROB. I BITE MY LIP TO STOP MYSELF FROM SCREAMING, UNTIL I TASTE THE TANG OF MY OWN BLOOD. TODAY, YOUR FIST COLLIDED WITH MY CHEEK AND ALL I DID AS WAS LAUGH. I CANNOT LEAVE YOU BY CHOICE, I WANT YOU TO LEAVE, YET I BEG YOU TO STAY. I WANT YOU TO DIE, YET I PRAY FOR YOUR LIFE. I HAD THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE MY SAVIOUR. BUT YOU? ALL YOU DID WAS CORRUPT ME. YOU BLEMISHED ME FOR ANYONE ELSE. YOU RUINED ME FOR MYSELF. YOU CALL ME ADULTEROUS, AND I BELIEVE IT. YOU SAY THAT I DON'T DESERVE LOVE, AND I BELIEVE IT. YOU TWIST MY HAND WHILE WHISPERING FILTHY WORDS IN MY EAR, AND I STILL BELIEVE YOU. YOU PASS OUT, AND FORGET WHAT YOU DID. I STAND HERE AND WISH FOR DEATH. IS IT LOVE? IS IT LOVE THAT COMPELS YOU TO DRAW BLOOD FROM MY SKIN? IS IT LOVE THAT WANTS YOU TO HIT MY FACE UNTIL MY EYE TURNS BLACK? IS IT LOVE THAT MAKES YOU DRINK? IS IT LOVE THAT MAKES YOU COME BACK TO ME EACH DAY? I CANNOT ESCAPE. MAMA HAD ALWAYS TOLD ME, "NO MATTER WHAT HE DOES, YOUR HUSBAND IS YOUR WORLD." SOMETIMES I WANT TO FIGHT BACK I WANT TO STAB YOU UNTIL YOUR TYRANNY BLEEDS OUT, BUT THREE SWEET WORDS FROM YOU, AND ALL THESE THOUGHTS FLY OUT. I FEAR THE DAY I WILL BECOME SICK, LIKE YOU. THE DAY I FINALLY DECIDE TO STRIKE BACK, WILL BE THE LAST TIME YOU EVER SEE ME. BUT FOR NOW, I SIT IN SILENCE WAITING FOR A SIGN.

WHILE I WAIT, I LET YOU WRECK ME, FOR WHEN THE TIME OF YOUR OWN DESTRUCTION COMES, YOUR CRIES WILL ECHO ALL OVER THE HEAVENS. AND WHEN MY LORD ASKS ME, "WHAT PUNISHMENT DO YOU WANT FOR HIM?" I WILL SMILE AND WHISPER, "FORGIVENESS."

MARSHA REHAN  
(VIII-A)

# OUR BIG FAT PAKISTANI FAMILIES

BY RABIA IMAD  
(IX-D)

People all around the world, especially Pakistanis, are blessed with relatives living in all corners of the world. Most of us have uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents and so many other kindred that play not a major, but a remarkable role in our lives. The list goes on, endless. What is life all about, if not listening to your aunt's spicy gossips, your uncle's old fashioned jokes and your cousin's stupid pranks? However, there are a few, who are not exactly our cup of tea, those who get on our nerves quite easily; the 'antagonistic aunt', 'the American cousin', and the uncle who is obsessed with pulling one's chubby cheeks. Slightly ironic how we often feel a fair amount of exasperation towards such relatives, who make our family lively and unparalleled. The

problem arises when a particular relative decides to make you their victim, and you can't help but count the hours till the end of the family gathering and the departure of that annoying family member.

These are the people behind your frustration and your fury; your exasperation and your displeasure. You might have ruined your vacations by visiting your mom's most beloved aunt whose old husband is always enquiring about your grades, and future plans and ambitions. You may also have experienced an aggravatingly geeky cousin who keeps bombarding you with a million questions regarding your studies, showing off his intellect. Not to mention that aunt who keeps on telling you to eat fresh green vegetables, to let go of the carbonated drinks and suggests you tons of home remedies to attain a glowing skin. And oh! How can we forget those aunts who compare you with their children, shower you with ques-

tions, give you lectures, or continuously narrate their children's mischievous behavior and remind you of your most embarrassing moments as a child.

Your displeasure can be felt radiating out of your body when your mother's second cousin's daughter says, "Oh she's so grown up now, I can't even believe my eyes!" Dear aunt, do you not know that the passage of time tends to do that to a person?

Or a strange uncle exclaims, "When you were a child, you used to resemble me," and your flustered mind tries hard, but fails miserably to recognize the old man.

But then these are the very people who brighten up and bring joy to our otherwise dull family gatherings, much like the delightful characters in a particularly hilarious film, which would be incomplete without the essential input from each and every one of them.

## A LESSON LEARNT

BY HAFSA IRFAN  
(IX-D)

Online socializing, like everything else, has its merits and demerits, and while we all may list down its numerous advantages, there is always the looming threat of cyber crime. Users of Facebook, Instagram and other similar social media websites have to be very careful about the kind of information they share and with what audience. Even a slightly careless move may have tragic consequences, as I learned this summer.

During the summer vacations, I started uploading many pictures on Facebook. Somehow, my account's privacy settings changed from 'Friends' to 'Public' and I did not notice but one day I received a message from some stranger. I would never have opened a stranger's chat if I had not seen a thumbnail of a picture which seemed to be mine. Upon opening the image, my worst fears

were confirmed. It was an indecent edit of my picture. My head was spinning. For two days, I tried my best to figure out a solution. Meanwhile, the person started sending me messages as well, but I was too scared to open them. I immediately changed my account's privacy settings and deleted all my photos but it was all fruitless now as the predator already had what he wanted.

That person demanded that I meet him somewhere otherwise he would upload my picture on all social media websites. The mere thought of that picture going viral made me nauseous. I was unable to decide my next step as meeting him was certainly not an option and neither was letting him spread the picture.

Finally, I decided to share my problems with my best friend as someone from the Intelligence lived in her neighbourhood. She discussed my problem with him and he tracked down my harasser and got him pun-

ished for his deeds. As a precaution, he told me to change the spelling of my username so that even if my harasser tried to search me on Facebook from a different ID, he would be unsuccessful. After 4 very hard days of trying my best to keep myself together and praying, I was finally able to take a breath of relief.

This experience taught me countless things. I've learned how to fight my own battles and always trust in God as He is the best of planners and always finds a way out for us. I've learned to be more cautious and to always listen to my parents' advice as undoubtedly they want the best for me, I've learned the true value of friendship, and lastly, I've learned the brutal truth of our society. I've learned that outside our safe bubble of friends, exist more malicious people who find joy in giving pain to others. But more importantly, that they can be tackled, and should be for the sake of our society.



27th February, 2015

**EXPERIMENT #29****UNSUCCESSFUL****ONCE IN A MILLENNIUM****BY RAMLAH SIDDIQUA & AREEBA ASIF (X-C)**

14th January, 2016

**EXPERIMENT #106****UNSUCCESSFUL**

3rd August, 2015

**EXPERIMENT #52****SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL**

15th July, 2016

**EXPERIMENT #158****SUCCESSFUL**

My experimentations have shown partial success. However, there has been an evident miscalculation on my part and it appears that I have travelled backwards through time rather than forwards; if the loincloths and the spears pointed at me are anything to go by- and the fact that they try to offer me as a sacrifice to the gods. As if. Pressing the emergency button takes me back to the present dimension.

"The trees? There's nothing left of them either. We have preserved the few that we could and have kept them in museums. We eat synthetic food- which is killing people, but if you don't eat at all, you die too. So this just holds death back for a while. The death rate is higher than it has ever been in history. Ours is a sad and depressed world. No one truly smiles. And we all know the truth- the human race is on its way to extinction."

"That can't be..." I am gripped in disbelief and horror. Have our actions and lack of concern for their consequences really caused so much damage to the human race?

"An expected response from someone from the past," the man says somewhat disdainfully. I do not say anything, mainly because I do not have anything to say.

He continues, "Isn't that *exactly* what you did? Or rather, are doing right now? You refused to believe in climate change. And since you refused to believe, you did not act towards stopping any of it. Even when you had the chance, you did nothing to prevent any of this from happening."

"How could I have known?" The words sound stupid, said aloud.

"How could you have known?" the man exclaims, "Everything was right in front of you. You knew the water levels were rising, you knew animals were going extinct, you knew the ozone layer was depleting yet you chose to do nothing about it. **Nothing!**"

I hang my head in shame, having no reply to give.

(adding more color to his already colorful visage) suddenly springs out of his chair and throws a vase at me. I manage to dive out of the way just in time, but this is not the welcome I was expecting. "GET OUT! GET OUT NOW! You are the one responsible for the deaths of millions. Do you have any idea what you have done by acting so carelessly?" This man is showing no signs of calming down.

One of them, dressed in more sober tones, stands up and whispers something to another man who is rapidly turning green. Have the people in the future somehow evolved and acquired chameleon properties? The man is composed now, to a considerable extent, I daresay, but is still looking daggers at me. Well, there goes my chance of becoming his best friend.

Sober Tones approaches me, guiding me out. The atmosphere surprises me, to say the least. Their world is a dull mixture of whites, blacks and greys and looks nothing like the world I have left behind. However, the people are covered in multicolor from head to toe. Peculiar. There are hardly any animals around, but then I see a creature resembling a blob fish, only *uglier*. That's what has managed to survive? **God help us.**

The man starts speaking in a solemn tone, "There aren't many animals left. And the ones that have managed to survive are kept with the utmost care in sanctuaries. The only kind of animal you'll find is the blobammal which can survive on very little amount of oxygen and can live in the dirtiest of places." *No kidding.*

Finally. I have been successful in creating a portal to the future. I shall be narrating the events that followed. I step through the portal into what appears to be a conference room and it immediately becomes apparent that this is another timeline, if the hairstyles and the people dressed in outrageous colors in the room are any indication. Add that to the holographs floating in the air, I deduce that this is definitely the future. I am immediately gripped by fascination and awe at the success of my experiment.

As I go on to explain my purpose to the attendees, it quickly becomes clear that something from my speech is infuriating them, making me pause. "So you're from the past are you?" They doubt *my* validity? "Yes, gentlemen. I assure you I am from the past."

"So you're the one responsible for this meeting aren't you?" What? I, responsible? Seeing my blatant confusion, he clarifies, "This meeting has been planned to work out how to save The Floating Species and how to make Water drinkable without it being processed, among other things."

"The floating spe... Oh you mean the *fish*?" "Do not call something that sacred by such a common name!" the one sporting flaming red hair exclaims. What ARE they talking about? "And I suppose you are the one responsible for the extinction of the trees as well." Trees? *Extinct*? The man who has rapidly been turning purple

# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRUTH

BY RAMEEN SALMAN  
(X-B)

Hi. I'm the Truth, and here's the thing about me: you probably hate me. Of course, sometimes when I miraculously seem to be of aid to you, you clasp your hands, fall to your knees, hollow your insides out through your tear ducts, and beg for me. For my assistance. And when I turn against you, with all my authoritative flair, you beg for my mercy against myself. If you believe in God, I am probably the most powerful force in this world after Him. (If you don't, you use me to claim he doesn't exist.) Nevertheless, the magnitude of my power will surprise you. I am powerful when I am out in the open, when I am preached, when I am made to saunter stark naked upon glaring, hungry streets. I am powerful when you hide me, trap me like Hope in Pandora's *pithos*, tipping me out once I'm ready to explode, splatter loss all over, and suppress myself beneath the debris.

I am power. I am weakness.

But frankly, if I prevailed blatantly, if I reigned without Diplomacy (my best friend, my biggest opponent), if I exposed myself leaving no part hidden, there would be but thinning tendrils of meaning in things; scarcely any fun. My simplicity is baffling. If I were to tell stories, I would have nothing to lose and certainly nothing to give. The fabricated tools of gallantry protagonists use to slay their villains, described with jagged, piercing edges thinly encrusted with the victim's remnants, would turn out to be kitchen scissors snipping open a packet of cocoa. The masterpieces that go beyond Van Gogh and Picasso would merely be mothers describing the drawings their children made in preschool.

I am exploited by monarchs, who promise me in statements that contradict me beyond comprehension. My absence is the only thing that keeps masses of starving bodies and bruised souls from breaking out in parades of angst and frustrations, my presence is the only thing that con-

soles aching limbs and stiffening hearts. And I'm waiting for when your measly minds will try to proclaim that I am dead, non-existent, when you will forget that I can be but hidden. That my calm, serene self can be the embodiment of the furies if I am unleashed at the wrong time.

I am the truth, and whether you hate me or love me, I am insensitive. I am flawless. And I am the only reality you will ever face.



## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

AS THE SCRIBBLER CONTINUES TO GROW, THE TEAM COULD NOT BE MORE GRATEFUL TO ITS READERS FOR SHOWING SUCH KEEN INTEREST IN THE CONTENT WE PUBLISH, TO ALL THOSE WHO SO ENTHUSIASTICALLY SEND US CONTRIBUTIONS OF THEIR WORK, AND OUR INTERNS WHO ROSE TO EVERY OCCASION OF HELPING OUT WHEN THE DRAFT OF THE DECEMBER '16 ISSUE WAS BEING PREPARED.

THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN REMARKABLE. HOWEVER, THE TEAM WOULD ALSO LIKE TO URGE CONTRIBUTORS TO STEP OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONES, AS A LACK OF DIVERSITY WAS NOTICED IN THE CONTENT OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED. THE TEAM WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCREASED PARTICIPATION FROM THE MATRIC SECTION, AND MORE CRITICAL ESSAYS OR RESEARCH-BASED AND OPINIONATED ARTICLES. WE WOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE WRITERS TO TRY THEIR HAND AT SHORT STORIES, AND SHOW SOME EXPERIMENTATION IN POETRY. WITH EVERY DRAFT THAT GOES FOR PRINTING, WE AIM TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THIS INITIATIVE, AND OUR READERS' SUGGESTIONS WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. WITH CROSSED FINGERS AND HOPEFUL HEARTS, MAY THE FUTURE BE BRIGHT!