EPHYPHANY
THE LIGHT IN ‘YOU’

“Caged by darkness, she was incapable of seeing her surroundings. Her voice choked, she felt cold shivers tense through her body, as she lay still on the ground, breathless. She could hazily see a 'Ray of light' pass through the cracks in the wall; moreover she could feel the light through and through that fell upon a hidden door. This door would lead her out from darkness to a shining light that she looked for; and now found.”

When we feel unworthy and hopeless amidst the chaos of life, all we need to do is to stay still and seek for a ‘Ray of light’ that will engulf our lives making every moment worthy. We fail to realise that this light of hope that we seek in the world outside in reality dwells within us, within our souls. Sometimes so cramped up by negativity we fail to recognize it and utilise it to extreme potential. There is nothing more endearing than our own inner self put to the best use in a world that's constantly developing an idea of despair. When you believe you have light within you, you do overcome all difficult circumstances.

The hope that dwells within you will day after day spread to everyone you come across, giving a new light to a world that too quickly turns toward despair. As long as a light of hope dwells within you, You will shine bright and nothing can dull your shine. When you gain the ability to seek for your own light and spread it to everyone you come across, then will you experience bliss and true peace.

“Shine your light and through it help others shine brighter.”

Marilyn Moses
(FYBA)

A SALUTE TO THE BRAVE WOMEN SOLDIERS OF THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES: AN INSIGHT

The Indian Army started recruiting women officers in 1992. Every six months, about 5000 women graduates and postgraduates between the ages of 21 and 25 years apply to join the Army. Barely a fifth clear the written test and only a tenth of those who do so are selected.

There have been many notable achievements as well by women in Olive Green. Here are some.

The Indian Army did Mt. Everest Expedition in 2005 and 2012 for women officers. Captain Shipra Mazumdar, Captain Ashwini Pawar, Cadet Tshering Ladol and Trainee Dechin Lhamo scaled the 8848-metre Mt Everest.

There was one expedition to highest point of Siachen Glacier, “Indira Col”. A team comprising only lady officers of the Indian Army scaled Indira Col, the highest point on Siachen glacier on 15 August 2009, making it the first ladies team to have reached the highest battlefield in the world.

The first woman in the history of the Indian Army, to be selected for the ‘Sword of Honour’, is Chennai-girl Divya Ajith in year 2010. She beat 244 fellow gentlemen and women cadets, to win the Best All-Round Cadet award and get the ‘Sword of Honour’, which is the highest award given to a cadet of the Officers Training Academy.

Women don’t join Combat Operations, but one woman beat the odds and joined the Territorial Army, she was Jawan Shanti Tigga. She was honoured by former President Pratibha Patil for being the first female jawan of our country.

Lieutenant Ganeve Lalji, a young intelligence officer created history by becoming the first woman to be appointed a key aide to an Army Commander.

Punita Arora is the first woman in India to don the second highest rank i.e. Lieutenant General of Indian Armed Forces and the first Vice admiral of Indian Navy.

Squadron leader Veena Saharan became the first woman pilot to land heavy lift transport aircraft IL-76 at Leh airfield.

Another officer, squadron leader Nidhi Handa, the first woman pilot in IAF from Himachal Pradesh, in a short career span of six years, reached the B-Green category which allows her to captain an aircraft in all the roles in every sector of the country.

History was made on 26 January 2012, when Flight Lt Sneha Shekhawat, a woman Indian Air Force (IAF) officer, led a contingent of 144 airmen at the 63rd Republic Day parade down the Rajpath. In 2015, she led a all women contingent on Republic Day Parade.

Well, most of the girls are happier being Army wife. Hope when you read, you get motivated to join the esteemed forces.

“You have never lived until you have almost died, and for those who choose to fight, Life has a special flavor, The protected will never know!”

-Capt R Subramaniam, Kirti Chakra (Posth)

Amit Rathod
(SYBSc)
MUMBAI. SEASONS.

Mumbai. Summer. Harsh shoves of light against the skin. Leering. Burning holes like staring eyes. Creating bullet holes of heat energy and sweat. Forceful rays in the afternoon, clutching your skin perversely and possessively, trying to dominate you. In the evening, somewhat pleasant as it does a tango with the breeze. It is leading.

Mumbai. Monsoon. The most terrible time, almost bereft of the touch of sunlight. Just bruised and broken shafts reaching out tentatively through the unyielding, deadened clouds. They reminded her of her early days when she used to sometimes forget her way and walk into walls. That sudden, solid impact, that acute, complete feeling of helplessness, of being blocked. That was the clouds and their broken monsoon.

Mumbai. Winter. Her favourite time. The light in the morning so inviting yet coy, savoured especially after a chilly night. Soft, buttery shafts soothingly stroking her cold arms and visage, making her useless eyes feel as though they had been gently filled with and massaged by warm water. In the afternoon, a caring, familiar glow of warmth, the type which made her feel secure, as if he held her hand in both of his.

In the evenings, on Marine drive, or Carter road, when people were falling in love or laughing with their friends, exultantly and ostentatiously awed by the melting shades of light, bled out so painstakenly by the sun in its final throes, she would sit quietly and alone. She would sit and feel the sun set, feel the Night creep in like an ashamed yet somehow unfeeling and cruel burgler. Feel the cold. Feel apart. Feel the textured rays of light on her skin, and wish to every heaven that she was able to see again.

Jahanvi de Ssouza
(FYBA)

UNCONDITIONAL

In the absence of support, or in your loneliness, You will find me with you, in sorrow or happiness, In the worst of emotional calamities, I will be by your side; All that committed to your soul I have to abide.

For the cruel world you are weak, I will act like your voice, for you to speak; Shed your inhibitions; embrace happiness; My care for you is timeless; Your scars and wounds, I can feel; Believe in yourself, they will heal; The tears in your eyes are accumulated; Let them roll down, you will feel elated; When in need, don’t turn back.

To search for me, I will stand beside you, like a calm sea; Paint your life with vibrant colors; You will reach for eternal happiness With your endeavors; You will be in my prayers forever; Don’t doubt my intentions - never ever.

Prof. Avkash Jadhav
Dept. of History

LIGHT

I sat up wondering one day How do we do see things around us? Along with the question came an answer As through the lightning comes a light And I stopped to ponder over what light is Light is what occurred to me then!

And everything that I see – From a beam of light through a cracked wall To the brightness of a bulb – Is light.

It is when the morning sun wipes away the dark Or the blaze of a torch in a blackout

Light is present when you wake up And is definitely at rest when you’re asleep It is the diya that you light for the Almighty And the lamps innumerable on various occasions

Light can be as deafening as any sound can be And just as powerful as anything can be.

Shruti Warrier
T.Y.B.A.
GUIDING LIGHT

When life turned gloomy and led to catastrophe,
I locked into myself for I had lost all hope.
The world around appeared so dark; nothing seemed beautiful,
not even dear nature's spark.
Completely lost, retreating from reality day by day -
a little light in the shadow showed me the way.
He held out his hand and pulled me out of the dark,
his touch caused my heart to chirp like a lark.
He drew my sadness away and breathed happiness in my life,
a flame of hope was ignited within by this little light.
He taught me to overcome fears and be brave,
and face every difficulty coming my way.
He made me optimistic and gave my life a new meaning – soon I realised,
it was sweet freedom I was breathing.
He became my guiding light and dispelled all the darkness;
made me cheerful and filled me with glee.
He was the reason I looked forward to each day,
and counted my blessings each new day.
He put the smile back on my face and restored my life –
my masterspirit had become my guiding light.

Saniya Gonsalves
SYBA.

THE VAGABOND IN ME

A dive into the unknown,
A plunge into the sea,
At that moment of exhilaration,
Thinking of what I wanted to be,
An astronaut, a teacher or a bird,
The worries didn't matter anymore,
As my feet cuddled the glistening water,
My heart raced all the more.
Fear was not overcome,
The face had said it all,
Happiness in the split of a second,
The worry of a never-ending fall.
When the pool of desire embraced my adventurous spirit,
A sense of satisfaction and joy
Enveloped me in a minute.
Wading through the soft chill waves,
As I swam towards the shore,
An enchanted grin upon my lips,
I discovered the Vagabond at my core!

Anushree Saha
T.Y.B.A.
TARDY RAY OF LIGHT

A shy ray of light peeped through the semi-transparent neckline of the aubergine dress.
It touched her face where a moment ago, a stray hair had been tickling her. She smiled and her cheeks fell once again into two lovely pits of beauty at the corners of her mouth.

Her eye caught the light, held it.

It was late, the light.

Everytime she had called out for it, demanded it, claimed it, she had seen noir.
Noir on the outside and on the inside.
She had opened her windows wide, closed them shut tight.
Had undressed and slipped back into her clothes.
But the light had refused to come. So she gave up waiting.

Today, the window was clasped shut when it had crept in unexpectedly –
to mock or relieve her of many burdens,
It touched her through her dress and finally she knew what it was to be happy.
The light splintered into a hundred shards of her own consciousness and she smiled again.

Those two little lovely pits of beauty...

Asmita Kuvalekar
FYBA

BRACE THE OCEAN OF YOUR MIND

With a sight so long
I embark on my journey
They think I am not strong,
I might get entangled in tyranny.
But life is one, it must go on.

Whatever the differences, whatever the bonds.
The beauty of my dreams
and the passion in my heart
It’s precious.

No one can grab its hold,
till there resides wonder in my soul.
And I daresay,
There would be another dull start
to another fine day.

But an opening of sorts
will finally find its way.
The rays of hope, the determination in my eyes
will illuminate me from within
And I will continue my life,
with the hands of a clock beside me ticking.

Now here I am at the cross-roads.
With a gleam in my eyes,
to conquer the Cosmos.
I finally take my first step forward,
Determined -
a sailor set out to brace the ocean of his kind.

Aishwarya Sharma
FYBSc
THE STREAK OF LIGHT

The door creaked
A streak passed through the little shaft,
Her eyes lit up with hope.

Had he come back?
After all that hassle and tussle over petty things?
The things that were mere dust but came their way, blinding them.
The love hadn't died, she knew as did he.
The soul wasn't tired, but the mind was –
Of endless efforts and painstaking cries to return
From the sucking typhoon of ego which drowned them,
In their mindless ids.

He swam against the trying force and was able to bring her out too.
But the fierce force tempted him.
Why not let her go?
And get done with all that trouble that she had put him through, for once.

The cards had been played well.
Satan licked his dry lips and winked at that blind fate.
It wasn't the eternal light of hope that passed through that shaft.
But the blazing streak, that would embroider the darkness to come.

Shalmali Sankpal
FYBA

LIGHT AND LIFE IN IMPRESSIONIST PAINTING

"What light is to the eyes, what air is to the lungs and what love is to the heart, Liberty is to the soul of Man."

-Robert Green Ingersoll

Indeed, liberty forms a crucial part of our lives as our eyes and fresh air for our sustenance. When similar autonomy is expressed by an individual in any form of art or literature, it not only illuminates our imagination but also the beauty of its expression. This similar mode of expression was taken up the Impressionist school of painting, that emerged in Paris, towards the second half of the 19th Century.

After 1850, the Political Environment in France went about tremendous change following the establishment of the 2nd Empire under Louis Napoleon, well known as Napoleon III. This marked a rupture in the history of Art in France between Official Art and Independent Art. Realism, that preceded the school of Impressionism, focused to portray ordinary scenes of the social life avoiding any exaggeration.

Les glaneuses, 1857, Jean-François Millet

It was a natural representation, de ce qui est vu (from what is seen). Painters like Gustave Courbet, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Jean-François Millet were famous painters who advocated this school of painting.

These women represent the peasant working class of rural France. The three women in the foreground are bent, focused on their work. Thus, he has juxtaposed the three phases of the back-breaking repetitive movement imposed by this thankless task: bending over, picking up the ears of corn and straightening up again. There is a clear cut distinction between the women and the field. The former acquires a greater part of the canvas than the later. By merely using sober colours, Millet
Degas and most importantly, Monet. Like Manet, painters like Renoir, are in the shadow of the Hat. Absinthe absorbs light, while the face and mouth that was beginning to develop around as a social taboo. He tried to capture life but something that is considered life style specially scenes at gardens, to represent ordinary scenes of modern identity. These paintings were the first depiction. Such art was not done in cafes, restaurants etc. As portrayed, the human figures are limited themselves to primary colours like red, blue and yellow and formed complementary colours, i.e., orange, violet and green. Thus, this created a juxtaposition of colours on canvas that exposed the vibrations of the atmosphere. E.g. ‘Le Gernouillère’

Unlike Realism, the human figures are not laid emphasis on than the forces of nature and the environment. Louis Leroy, one of the famous art critics, organised a series of exhibitions around Paris that gave these painters to put up their paintings as well as their identity. These paintings were the first to represent ordinary scenes of modern life style specially scenes at gardens, cafes, restaurants etc. As portrayed, the artists have not exaggerated their depiction. Such art was not done in their workshops but captured at that very moment. They had to be quick to capture the intensity and essence of the sun. Thus, speed and accuracy was given a lot of importance. E.g. When Monet decided to paint ‘Les Meules’ (Haystacks) (1890-1891), a series, he studied the atmosphere and the field including their transformation at different time periods during the day with the changing light. Perfect, distinct and crisp lines don’t exist. The lines are scattered and disseminate in the background. The brush strokes appear brusque and rough as he observes it from different angles. The light includes the shadow, the axis, the direction and the arrangement of the haystacks indicate the position of the light. Monet distinguishes between hot colours (yellow, red and orange) and cold colours (blue, purple and mauve) The similar description goes for his other series of paintings, namely, ‘Peupliers’(1891), ‘Cathédrale Rouen’ (1892-1894) and ‘La maison de Parlement’ (1900-1904)

To reproduce an immediate sensation, the impressionists defined a space where colours disperse. The shadow are presented with vibrant colours that produce an image of the dark. It was also the same time when tube colours were invented, thus making the palette mobile. One important aspect of these painters is that they never used the colour black. Black represents the absences of light. It is a mere nuance of the sober that they depict in their paintings.

Manet’s ‘Le déjeuner sur l’herbe’ (1863) was rejected by the mainstream artists and was then displayed in the ‘Salon des Refusés’ in the same year. The presence of a nude woman in the middle of two dressed men justifies the obscenity of modern life. The nude woman looks straight into the eyes of the viewer. He dulls the difference between lightness and darkness. This painting represents the liberty of the artist to portray what he wants to and use art as a means of expression.

Thus, natural light played a dynamic role for the Impressionist painters. The forces of nature like the sun, moon, wind, water played a crucial rule along with their interaction with one another. The season, day and time occupied an important place in the life of an impressionist artist. Thus, Impressionism focused on scenes of public leisure and conveyed the new sense of alienation experienced by the inhabitants of the first modern metropolis.
"Hey…online? On G-talk?"
"Yup, but invisible!"
"Good to catch up finally. How was your trip?"
"Superb, but the weather betrayed on the last few days when a major part of the gallivanting was planned, post-work!"
"Well Europe is (in)famous for its unpredictable weather.
Uh…what I wanted to say is that I am coming to Kolkata this Thursday- was wondering if it would make sense to meet up for coffee."
"Do you belong to the Facebook ghetto?"
"Yes, in a big way. In fact I was casually going through your profile and happened to notice that we have a few common friends. How do you know Sonia?"
"She's a very good friend from school."
"Okay. I know her sister very well. She's been like a sis-friend to me here in the US."
"Coming back to business- what do you think about the idea of meeting up? Do you think it is worth it? All that I have gauged so far is that you felt it was too early for you to think of settling down etc. Correct me if I'm wrong."
"That's what. But if it's an ASAP situation for you, then coffee will not make any sense.
"Not ASAP! But yes at the right time, not very late."
"But “very” late would be how many years?"
"I am 28 and will turn 29 soon. I don't want to get married when all my hair will have turned white and all my teeth will have fallen. Just kidding!"
"Do you have a strong opinion about when you want to get married?"
"Few years later would be ideal. But it seems you will have lost your teeth and started graying?!"
"Inevitably!"
"That may be a bit late for me. I guess by that time I will be back in the country. I don't have a long-term plan of being in the US."
"Cool!"
"Do you like music? I ask this because that's another big deal for me. I love music. I would say, it's an important part of my life."
"I certainly enjoy it. An avid listener! Do you play or sing?"
I play the guitar and keyboard; also tried the harmonica in the past. Once you know one instrument it is not hard to switch to another. But to be honest, I don't do any of them too well. And I also sing. In a nutshell, I devote a lot of my spare time to music.
"Perhaps I am jumping around topics. But I am not a pro at this!"
"Neither am I!!!"
"I am not getting a good picture about your stance regarding all this. Probably I'm not letting you speak"
"I was just curious about your idea of a right person.
"For me friendship is above everything else. And a decent sense of humour is important too."
"That's right. It is super important and I think that I have a decent one. How would you rate yours?"
"I detest the company of boring people!"
"That's a strong word. Quite the same for me because I am not the serious sort at all. If it's okay with you, I look forward to having more of such conversations. So do you think we should meet up for coffee once I'm in the city?"
"Do I have to accept or decline right away?"
"Nope! When do you want to decide though?"
"Let's see."
"I'd love to meet you when I am in the city, though I don't know what you are thinking."
I personally feel if we don't hype it up, there is no harm meeting casually. I need to drive out to a friend's place now."
"Okay. Bye for now."
"Take your time but do let me know what you are thinking. Bye."
"Moms!
"Your mom has the idea of you being a perfect son!
"They never accept that you've grown up."
"She vouches for your decency and academic proficiency in a big way. It's like a claim-to-fame sort of thing and seems to be in a real hurry to hook you on with someone."
"Actually when my parents visited me they thought that I was lonely. Thus the rush. But trust me, I'm cool about it. There's no hurry of any kind. I want to be sure about my partner. But that is hard for my mom to understand, so it seems!"
"Any snack with coffee?"
"Uh, no thanks. What about you?"
"Not for me either."
"Café Frappe for me."
"I'll go for Iced Eskimo with extra ice-cream and chocolate sauce."
"Do you know people from my school?"
"Yeah."
"Do you have acquaintances from mine? Common friends can be quite important."
"Of course I do. But perhaps most of them will be your seniors. They are still good friends."
"By the way did I tell you that I socialize quite a lot?"
"Me too! Loads of friends- always..."
catching up- having fun to de-stress ourselves. Nothing gets better than that!

“You bet!”

“Are most of them in the city or scattered?”

“Most of them are all over the globe!”

But whenever they are in town, we make it a point to rejuvenate fond memories.”

“What are your plans for the future? Would you like to move abroad?”

“Well, not really. What about yours?”

“With my kind of a profession it’s very difficult to decide on any particular place- anytime I may have to move to any part of the globe that my employer wants me to. And of course I would not mind since I love traveling.”

“Me too, but just for pleasure trips. Which are the places that you have visited so far?”

“Lots actually- since I have been in the USA for the last few years, I have been to most of the hot-spots around; several times to UK to visit my sister and some places in Europe too. But I am ashamed to admit that many places in India still remain unexplored!”

“Dekha hoy nai chokkhu melia, ghor hote shudhu dui pa phelia, etki dhoner sheesh er opor etki shishir bindu…”

“Indeed! Maybe it’s important to share this piece of info- I’m trying to get a transfer to the India office. Perhaps more of my country then.”

“Futuristic!”

“That I am. I always plan things well in advance. Learnt it from my dad. According to him that’s the sole and surest way to success. From academics to career to meeting friends and sleeping - it’s all chalked out.”

“You are way too organized, it seems.”

“Don’t you think this is a non-issue?!”

“Not really.”

“The coffee’s quite good. Yesterday I tried Barista. Kolkata seems to catching up fast on the coffee-shop culture.

When I left there were barely 4 or 5 joints; but now there are as many in each locality and always choc-a-block. I’m not much fond of this spurt of westernization. For that matter I don’t like the USA too much. Am stuck there for my job, but have had enough of that too- restive to move back. I also noticed the flux in the population of WB- seemed to be a mixed crowd from neighboring states.”

“Local cosmopolitanism!!?”

“Just see the way it’s getting crowded here. Can we shift to some other place which may be less noisy? I’ll check the adjacent one.”

“I think I’ll have to make a move now. Got to go elsewhere.”

“Hi Vedika. Dying to catch up with you- got so much to share. That guy certainly seemed awkward. One can’t be confident. Undoubtedly decent. But speaks incoherently at times and has weird ways. Would you believe that he was carrying his Nikon D 700 around and when, out of sheer shock, I asked him the reason, he said just to take snaps on the way; it’s a passion. Passion all right, but images of the road and people, just clicking on all the way to the place. But by that time I had made up my mind- so there was no question of another minute, leave alone another place for an extended chat over coffee! To something that one of said his reaction was “No ego-problems for me”. Of all the examples, the one that he cited to explain it better... gosh! That’s almost like being devoid of a personality. The faceless person on G-talk and the one in the coffee shop are poles apart! Some other trivia that I had to listen to were no less- no one in the family has access to the mom’s room, it’s perpetually locked! And would you believe that his mom has started going for dance lessons of late to complement her singing. She intends performing both simultaneously; seems she’s forgotten her age. Maybe she’ll set a trend in statutory warning: “Singing and dancing at the same time can be hazardous after a certain age”. I should have understood that they were a lot of ETs from her incessant calls and the hideous and hilarious behaviour. From his words the family seemed to be post-docs in control-freakness. Especially the dad- he’s the boss. No space business. The thought itself is claustrophobic! Sheer waste of time. Am so disgusted. Can you please squeeze some time for me tomorrow? I must get rid of this feeling.”

Hey...I called to see if we could meet once more before I left- really wanted to. But perhaps you were not quite game. No problem. Space is very important. I am leaving tomorrow. So it does not seem possible to be able to meet anymore this time. I wish you all the best for the next set of things that you have planned. However, am still asking, do you want to keep in touch because I definitely don’t want to send you emails or chat with you if that’s bothersome. Take your time, but please let me know.

It was great knowing you.

Next time I come my teeth would have all fallen and my hair turned grey.

Hope all goes well for you and yours.

Warm regards…”

Dr. Prasita Mukherjee
Assistant Professor,
Department of English