



**Institute of
Liberal Arts**



**THE
LITERARY
FULCRUM**

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Welcome Note

Dr. Nadia Anwar

Editor-in-Chief, The Literary Fulcrum.

Chairperson, Department of English and Literary Studies.

Acting Dean, Institute of Liberal Arts.

We all fight wars – visible and dark, ugly and crass, crazy and dreary – but what makes us emerge out of them is that sweet, gentle, and soft outpour of words that caress our restless souls, lull our anxieties, and kindle a flicker of hope to stay alive and embrace dreams galore. The second edition of TLF is meant to be that gentle shower, that subtle touch that creases our sorrowful brows and refine the contours of our face with sweet smiles.

I am grateful to my wonderful team who selected the best writings from the dozens of submissions they received over the year. It is indeed a task that requires great patience, rigorous review, and disinterested sifting. Their efforts will go a long way into embellishing the literary scene at the department in particular and across the country in general.

I do not like to make big claims at this fledgling stage of TLF' s journey but, at least, I share my desire for it to acquire a respectable and recognizable status that positions it as an aesthetic force to grow and sustain. God willing, with hard work, humility, and team efforts, we will keep working towards excellence.

May you have a soulful experience!

Message from the Editors

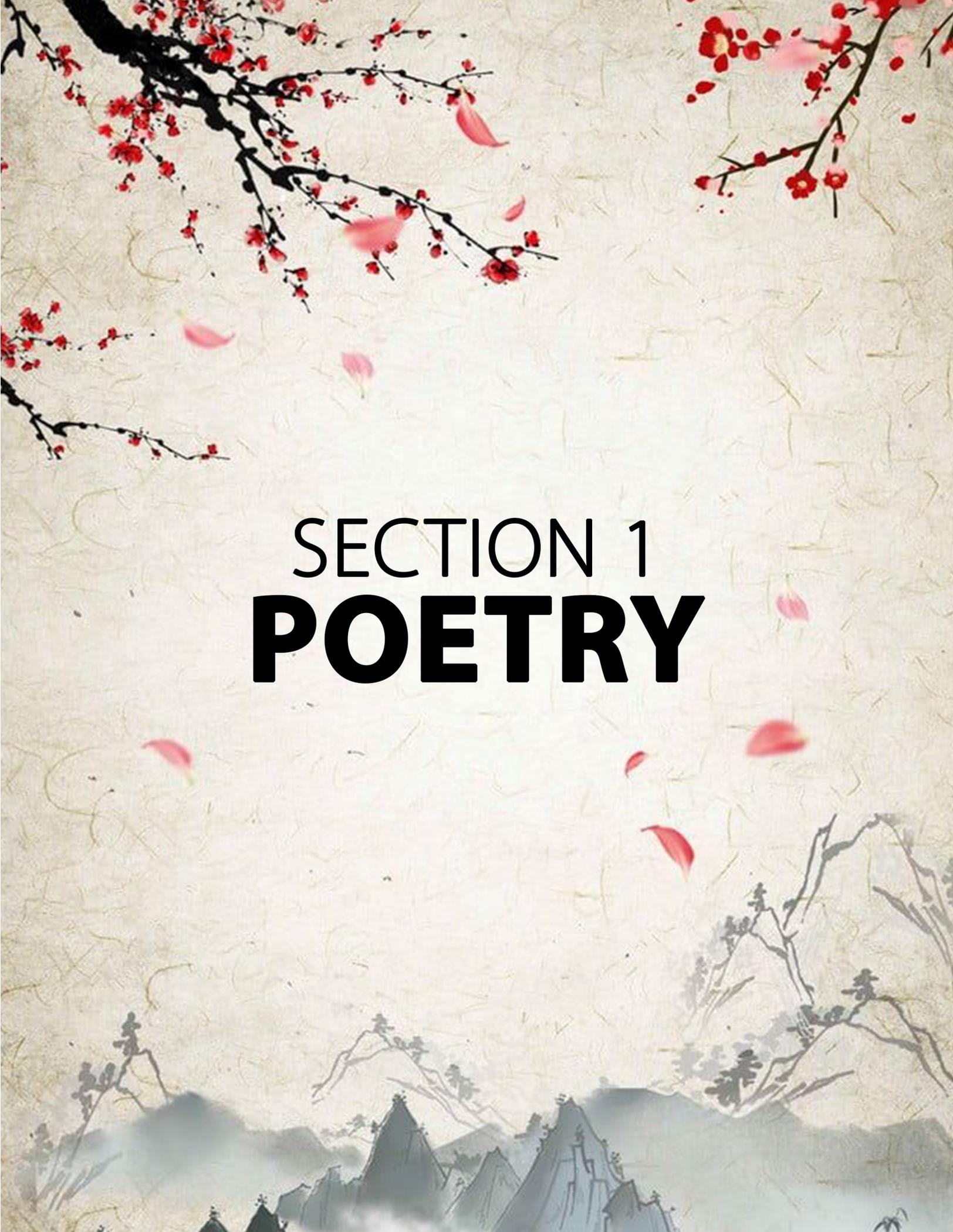
In penning down the preface to the second edition of The Literary Fulcrum, we feel nothing but pride and joy. We are immensely grateful to our readers for the ardor and enthusiasm with which the first edition of TLF was received and appreciated. This recognition of our efforts was indeed very motivating and has only added to our zest for making TLF a prestigious literary platform.

The second edition brings forth an array of literary creations: candid, pristine, effervescent, and scholarly in their disposition. TLF does not believe in inhibiting young minds and as will be seen, this edition is a true reflection of how the youth perceive the world around them, their yearnings and fantasies, their anger and disappointment, their dreams and hopes. We are glad that The Literary Fulcrum became a channel for reflecting the impassioned voices of our young students. This is just the beginning of what is hoped will be a most fulfilling journey.

The current edition of TLF showcases a diverse blend of philosophical, witty, humorous, and satirical expressions edging towards existential, feminist, and postmodern debates. Poetry reigns supreme as it did in the first edition. There is a fine blend of lyrical, romantic, patriotic, and narrative poetry catering to all tastes. Most importantly, students have tried their skills at modern renditions of the classical genres: odes, sonnets, elegies, and haikus. The short story section includes a novel and engaging contribution by one of our many intelligent students. The second edition introduces two new sections: Drama/Play script and Contributions by UMT Family. The first section features a wonderful play inspired by the Greek and Elizabethan playwrights while the second section showcases the most creative pieces by our UMT family.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Chairperson & Acting Dean of DELS/ILA and Editor in Chief, Dr. Nadia Anwar for her unwavering dedication to The Literary Fulcrum. We also stand indebted to the UMT administration and the Office of Communication and Media (OCM) for their constant support and encouragement. Last but not the least, we are extremely grateful to our most valuable contributors who chose TLF for satiating their creative aspirations. Happy Reading to all!

- Managing Editor: Ms. Sobia Ilyas
Senior Lecturer, DELS.
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Lecturer, DELS.
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Lecturer, DELS.

The background is a traditional Chinese ink wash painting. It features dark, expressive brushstrokes for plum blossom branches with small red flowers and larger, soft pink petals falling from them. The lower portion of the image shows misty, layered mountains in shades of grey and blue, with sparse, dark pine-like trees. The overall texture is that of aged paper.

SECTION 1
POETRY

Where You Are Found

By Aleena Haider

Bachelor of Science in English Literature, Session: 2021-2025

Walking through the dark, shallow road of a tragic life

Alone, encountering numerous strifes,

With Angel and Devil on both sides,

Finding asylum in the monochromatic tides,

Moon glints stretching around-

But my home is where you are found.

To Find the Answer

By Aleena Haider

Bachelor of Science in English Literature, Session: 2021-2025

Looking at the mirror

I wonder who am I?

Deep sighs and pangs, pearls trickling down the cheeks

My entire being is shaken.

I tremble in agony and sob.

There to find the answer!

I Rise from the Ashes

By Zarmina Khan

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2019-2023

I - lost and naïve.

I - quiescent and powerless.

I - a woman of clay,
and they molded me in any way.

Just like the rain falling down the dark clouds,
nurtures the barren land.

The tears gushing down her eyes,
strengthens her Sisyphean self.

Just like the pure flowing water,
brings life.

I, through my bleeding words,
bring peace.

Disciplined, hardworking and quiet,
I erase myself, rewrite, erase and rewrite.

Longing that I might,
reflect, contemplate and self-realize.

And in the spring evening,
just like the symphony of hope.

Just like the last spark.

I rise from the ashes.

I rise from the ashes.

Of Days Gone Past

By Umar Bashir

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022

Ah! The old days when the sun shone bright
when the darkest hours were only, the stage fright
the freeing feeling on, the merry-go-round
seems to elude me, now that I am bound
I cannot envision it, no matter how hard I try
these adult burdens make me long for days, gone by

An Unbidden Guest

By Hoorub Saleem

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022

These days I'm having my tea with a stranger,
A shapeless, formless, unbidden guest.

He arrives when the clock's tick reigns over all sounds in my home

He leaves when a notification pops up on my phone.

I've become used to this intrusion considerably,
Anything is better than being alone with a cup of tea.

There's something very strange about him.

He takes the shapes of people I have loved and lost!

Sometimes he's on a wheelchair with a newspaper in his hands;

Sitting and taking small sips of tea,

Just like my grandpa did.

A lean, white-haired man, laughing loudly when I push his chair in circles.

Sometimes, the shape is changed,

And I'm seeing reading the newspaper aloud to him,

Coz he's crossed a century,

And has started seeing the world with my eyes.

Other times, I see him morphing into a pair of arms,

That I know really well.

A scent that still lingers in my head.

Those arms with soft flesh and chubby elbows,

I find wrapped around myself.

I fit so perfectly in them.

I see the kohl-laden eyes.

After a long time, I feel that's Mom,

After a long time, I feel I'm home.
Eyes recognize her, but tongue ceases to form words,
All my strength succumbs to the warmth of her embrace,
Reduced to pieces;
My body finally feels light after all these days.

Gradually, I see her smile fading away into a shapeless cloud,
The stranger's back on his seat,
Touching the rim of the cup,
Looking at me with kind eyes.

I feel shadows of people around me on the dining chairs,
Feasting on my memories while I sit alone,
Wondering;
How mind takes you to the moments
That body has outgrown

I sit and watch
Till he reads my thoughts,
And nods in acquiesce.
A stranger,
That likes to be called
"Loneliness".

Autumn

By Hoorub Saleem

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022

The calm mornings when the sky feels as shy as a newlywed bride,

With the harvests going on,

Grains being collected and stowed like luckily found gold coins.

The forest queen clad in orange gazes at the wilting flowers,

Thinking, an end sometimes is necessary for a fresh start.

Listening to the rustling sound of leaves under my feet,

The earthy smell of autumn fills me in as I breathe.

The silence around me as if Nature has been holding her breath for too long,

I found autumn as a cure for the meek hearts to grow strong.

And as I age, I learn that all those myths associating dejection with autumn exist for no
reason,

Since autumn, if embraced wholly, can actually be the happiest season!

A Dark Night and I

By Ramisha Javaid

Bachelor of Studies in English Literature, Session: 2020-2024

Thunder storm and hard rain,
Clouds shrieking as in severe pain
Standing alone with a heavy baggage,
A Dark Night and I.

A long road not yet done,
And no options, but the only one
Suffering, walking in my torn shoes, and...
A Dark Night and I.

Deserted fields all around,
The weather's is the only sound
Dreadful, horrific and I alone...
A Dark Night and I.

12' o clock late at night,
The Darkness is fading my sight
All that I can see far, is...
A Dark Night and I.

Rain's hitting me like a stone,
But at least to bear this, I'm not alone
With me, are two dear friends of mine...
A Dark Night and I.

Can I Have Off Today?

By Ramisha Javid

Bachelor of Studies in English Literature, Session: 2020-2024

Hey Life! It's me..! Shall I introduce myself to you?

I guess I don't need to do so...

Life! Who else can know me better than you?

I'm the one always being your puppet to play...

I'm the one in which, being a pain you stay!

Life! You broke my heart several times...

I was blank, had no crimes!

Did I blame you?

Life! You have taken away the hope from me,

Hope to live and to flee!

Did I blame you?

Life! You gave me stones when I asked for Peace...

Throughout that pain you left no ease!

Did I blame you?

Life! Am I incapable of being hurt?

You left me in the dark and dirt!

Did I blame you?

Life! I'm not asking for a permanent relief,

Coz you'll not give me as I believe!

But Life! I need an off to be hard again,

Hard enough to bear the sufferings you let me go through

And to bear all the pain.

Dear Life,

Can I have off Today?

The Lost Spirit

By Hibah Zahid

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022.

I had to write, so I took a sheet.
I wanted to create a masterpiece
There is something I can't defeat.
The war within and the war for peace.
I pen it down but my words were shallow
No one to flourish, they lie fallow.
Anticipating things without imagination,
tired of scuffles and presuppositions.
I feel numb as I write, I feel like a lost spirit
I write for the world but the world won't see it
So I leave this place and go beyond,
to find my home where I belong
It's keeping me ice cold what once was warm,
bitter truth and realities have hit me like a storm
As I unlock the mysterious doors,
I look for similes and metaphors
They are as shallow as my thoughts
How do I fill these empty spots?
My face is pale and my heart is stoned
I can't let you go, my everlasting bond.

Ode on Tranquility

By Iqra Butt

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022.

A walk on the footprints left by ancestors
Away from the crowd and the concrete forest
In a valley of solitude, amongst rustling of leaves
Awakened by the bosom friend of Apollo, the luminous sun
No need of the hourglass, to hold on every dream
Let it float, on the bed of cherish-able memories

Silence carried by the gentle west wind
Unconcerned of desirous Plutus and the raging world
Innocence embraced by men in a universe unknown
Take nothing from the insatiable city of the mortals
Attaining happiness in every little drop of rain
O life! where to end and where to begin?

“Bereavement”

By Wafa Waheed

Bachelors of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022

This temporary life is a black and white image
 Yet both are a part of man's life
 Ever since my parents left this ephemeral world
 The world has become a marshland for me
 How could one feel the pain inside my heart?
 'Twas like a nightmare after a nightmare
 What shall I call this ephemeral world with evils all around?
 A trial for the believers? An exam? No? what then...?
 Ah, my poor soul! Who could ease this grief?

And now my heart has become childish,
 Denying the harsh reality that they are no more.
 Horrible nights took away my peace...
 For, I feel as if they will appear suddenly.
 I feel like the cold breeze of May stole
 Everything I had, silently!
 Ah, my poor soul! Who could ease this grief?

My heart cries with pain, my eyes weep, I feel like
 I lost myself somewhere in the darkness.
 Life without parents is like a fish out of
 water...
 Ah, my poor soul! What shall I do?
 For the days are passing like a flowing river.
 With fake normality,
 'bout dying from inside with pain.

The wound is so deep that words shall not be enough
Ah, my poor soul! Who could ease this grief?

Death has taken the pearls of my life
And now it seems as this grief has become
My companion till departure...

For this wound can't undergo a cure! What
shall I do?

Indeed, it is a test from the Great God
He shall give me patience
And He shall purify my soul...

The Little and Skinny Love: A Poem

By Sarah M.

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022

Whose love is that? I think I know.
Its owner is quite happy though.
Full of joy like a vivid rainbow,
I watch her laugh. I cry hello.
She gives her love a shake,
And she laughs till her stomach gets sore.
The only other sound's the break,
Of distant waves and birds awake.
The love is little, skinny, and deep,
But she has promises to keep,
After cake and lots of sleep.
Sweet dreams come to her cheap.
She rises from her gentle bed,
With thoughts of kittens in her head,
She eats her jam with lots of bread.
Ready for the day ahead.

A Land that is Watered from the Blood of Martyrs

By Tuba Naeem

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2019-2023

A land that is watered from the blood of martyrs
A country having beautiful towns and towers
A land that is a fortune for the starters,
That promises to protect its buds and flowers

A land that is the fruit of prayers
Daughters of that land have their sky
A land that blows love and care in the air
A country that has its motives high

A country whose principles are faith, unity, and discipline
Whose deserts and lakes are wide, and lands fertile
A land that follows "La ilaha Illallah" as its doctrine
A pure land that promises to spread letters of smile

Come to a wonderland of Pakistan! where reality comes from dreams
Welcome to Pakistan! Whose motto is self-esteem

A Superstition I Believe In

By Zarmina Khan

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2019-2023

After constant failure and loss in my life,
I decided to believe in superstitions.
That might help me in strife,
With my own self and my ambitions.
Soon, I got my right eye twitching.
Waiting for good luck,
Presto, saw my laptop glitching.
I ran to fix it, amok.
Hoping to bring luck in life-still pitchy,
Pet a black cat on my birthday.
Rather getting my hands itchy,
Met a black cat crossing my pathway.
I-miserable, failed and no-good,
Found all superstitions, deceitful.
“I mustn’t lose hope but I should,
Do something to be peaceful.”
Fed animals, spent time with Nature.
On my way to self-realization,
Made a child laugh-with wet eyes on a stretcher.
And served humanity for salvation.
To bring good luck more, to the core,
I saved a young girl from suicide.
Live for yourself, but others’ more,
Is a Superstition I believe in.

Untitled

By Khadeeja Ayub

MPhil in English Literature, Session: 2020-2022

Have you ever seen me doing things half-heartedly?
Have you not noticed that I am prone to submission?
I be there where I have to be in a way that is bound to be seen
I know not of being practical
So, I embrace shortcomings with an open heart like I do advantages
I know the art of holding in my eyes that I hold in my heart
So the world would know where I stand
And with whom
I try a path till it has nothing to give and nowhere to lead
Only so I could say "I tried everything"
I have been damned to broken paths
But I walked the full length
I know the cycle represents futility but I never give myself relaxation of despair
Till all the poetry in the universe made sense
And reasons became intimate to me
My intensity has worn me out
And I tasted what it would feel like to decay under tons of dirt.
I know what I'm doing.
Sincerely, Khadija.

My Heart is Caged

By Areej Aslam

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2019-2023

My heart is caged
It flew me to a rage
Want to break all these locks,
Possible? YES,
Then;
Feed your soul
Not your body
With what is told
Do control
Your *Nafs*, and submit the whole.
Before you are cold

The Sovereignty

By Areej Aslam

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2019-2023

The soul of fear occupies me
Who knows what fate would be?
Sometimes it hurts my body so much;
That my pain makes me hunch.
Hope for His mercy, makes me alive
And lets my heart revive
Then miseries and sorrows run away,
And protect my thoughts from getting astray
A ray of forgiveness will be a ray of hope;
A way for my sins to get chopped.
You can see Him through tear and blood combined;
Then you will have the bliss of that divine
He is everywhere but still nowhere
Go and let your heart hear.

Not to fear Satan is what He says
Fight your *Nafs* and everything will be solved
Disobeying Him will make you regret
But His greatness will make you forget
Move forward and be the one
Who always thanks Him a ton?
I looked for words to describe His beauty
But failed to find them, of such worth.

A dark, atmospheric scene of a ruined city street. The street is overgrown with nature, with a stream flowing through the center. The buildings are tall and dilapidated, with vines and moss growing on them. The lighting is dim, with a bright light source in the distance creating a hazy, ethereal glow. The overall mood is mysterious and haunting.

SECTION 2
**SHORT
STORIES**

Déjà Vu

By Umar Bashir

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022

Ah. They're warm and soft. Has summer always been this gentle? The stores on my left and right... they're all glowing in the golden sunbeams. Everything is eerily colorful. It's the cinema street. Our go-to spot for whenever we're in mood for a blast.

She's standing at a distance. My lips immediately stretch without any effort. Her eyes fall on me. I walk towards her without needing to holler, all the while my teeth itching to make an appearance. The distance. Why am I not getting closer? My feet.

They're...they're frozen. This can't be happening. The color starts fading all of a sudden. Everything is turning gray. Laera. I start running towards her. Shouting, waving. She looks confused. She can't hear me. I shout at the top of my lungs but she still can't hear me. The unnerving feeling returns. The street opens up with a loud crack. I shout with all my might but she looks stupefied, scared. I reach out my hand but the crack is widening and widening. It's not stopping.

Nooooooooo---!

It's the same room. Whoo. That was... one hell of a nightmare. My heart's still pounding. Why do I still have that uneasy feeling? —Woah I'm drenched —Oh shit, I'm late. I can't be late today. Argh. That....Why didn't he wake me up!

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Yes! I made it. Right on time. Where's Laera sitting... there she is.

"You barely made it this time."

"Yea I overslept a little and my lovely roommate Finch didn't bother to wake me up. That guy really gets on my nerves sometimes. What, did you lose something?"

"I can't find my notes. No. No. I think I left them back in the dorm."

"I don't think you will need them today."

"Why? Is today's lecture gonna get canceled?"

“Cos we have a surprise waiting for us.”

“Well everyone, it’s been some time now so I think a surprise quiz would be a good change of pace.”

“Nooooooo. Come on!”

“Reid. How?”

“And I think it’s gonna be from chapter three we did in the last lecture.”

“Strange. Very strange. You’re gonna tell me about it later.”

**

“Laera. I’m hungry. I didn’t eat anything all morning. Can we go eat something now? We finally have no more lectures.”

“Okay. I’ve also run out of fuel.”

“It’s a good thing I had revised past week’s lectures on the weekend, otherwise I would’ve been in a tight spot today.”

“So, tell me now Reid. How did you know professor Newel was gonna take a surprise quiz and of what?”

“I just... had a feeling, like I knew it was gonna happen or it had already happened. I don’t know. It’s difficult to say.”

“Everyone! We have a psychic here. If you want to know-----”

“Do you have to announce it to everyone? I’m not gonna remove my hand unless you stop.”

“Is that a yes? Laera? hmmmphh? Okay. I’m removing it now. You gave me your word.”

“If you ever do it again, I’m gonna bite your fingers.”

“Then don’t say embarrassing things and I won’t do it. Ugh I got your lipstick on my hand now. Hand me a tissue.”

“Gotta go. I’m gonna be late for work.”

“Okay.”

“See you tomorrow.”

“Bye.”

How did I know that? Why isn't this feeling going away, like my insides are coiled and twisted and it's all gonna come undone in a moment. Is it the aftershock of the dream? Probably. It doesn't matter anyway. It was only a dream.

**

It's beautiful today. A good day for a stroll don't you think? No scorching heat. A light, cool breeze and a walk in the park, barefooted on the tender grass. It's a good thing we had no lectures on a day like this. One needs to unload every once in a while.

Hmmmhh, Ahhhhhh. It's nice.

I think it might rain, Laera. Laera? Laera? What's the matter? Why aren't you saying anything? Why, what is it? Tell me! Laera, say something, anything. Tell me. You can't say anything? It's okay. I'll figure it out. Where did the trees go? Why are things disappearing? What is happening!! It's all gone. It's okay. Everything will be okay. Don't let go of my hand. Laera. Leara!!! Where are you? Come back! Laera! Laera! Where are y---

ou.

Another nightmare? This one was different. That unsettling feeling has doubled. What is --- this is so not normal. —How long have I been asleep? Crap, I'm late for my shift.

“Good evening, sir. What would you like to have? Here is our menu and please feel free to ask me any questions you might have.”

“I'd like the deal number two and please ask the chef to add a little more salt and gravy on the side.”

“Okay sir. That will be \$15.50.”

“Thank you. Please take this device. You will be notified through it when your order is ready.”

Just a couple more minutes till I'm done with my shift. Thank the lord I slept a little before coming here, otherwise I would not have made it through the shift. She's also working at the moment. I guess we won't be seeing each other today. That feeling. It's lit up again. She's gonna ... come through the door in a minute. But she's working and how do I know that she's gonna come. She's here. She's walking. Inside the restaurant through the door. It's ... it's...

“Heyo Reid. When will you be done?”

“Uhhhh... In a couple of minutes.”

.
. .
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“So, what about your shift?”

“Didn’t go. I had to help Nina with something, so I asked a coworker to cover my shift. I was in the neighborhood so I thought I’d drop by.”

“Hey Laera. There’s something wrong. I keep getting this nervous feeling, like the same one with the surprise quiz during professor Newel’s class and it’s not going away.”

“Don’t tell me you actually think you’re a psychic?”

“No but I can’t ignore it. And it’s making me anxious.”

“You can chalk it up to watching too many movies. Oh and that reminds me, we’re still up for tomorrow right? We’re gonna see the latest Doctor Strange no matter what. I just have to avoid the spoilers until then.”

No use continuing the discussion any further. She will only joke about it.

“Yea. Meet me outside the dorms around 5:45.”

“Okay.”

**

It’s cold. And dark. My eyes have already adjusted to it. It’s an empty room. My hands and feet are tied to the chair. I panic and start looking around. She is also here. Tied like me but unconscious with a glass wall separating us. Laera, wake up. Laera, Laera. She comes to and starts looking about her.

“I’m here Laera. Don’t panic.”

“Follow my voice Laera.”

She slowly looks in my direction. “That’s it, nearly there.” And continues to turn her head. “Laera, Laera. I’m this way.”

She can’t see me. No, no, no. Look here, I’m here.

“I’m right here. Just follow my voice.”

The room is darkening. No. Stop. She is disappearing from my sight. “Laera, listen to me. I’m on the other side of the glass wall. Laera, Laera.”

I can't see her. She's gone. "Laera!!"

Laera.

Again? Lord am I cursed or something? Like the previous ones, I am soaked with sweat and restless. —Oh right, the movie. Still an hour left. Better get ready.

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.
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"Over here, Reid."

"Let's go. I'm beyond excited for this. I wonder how many cameos we're gonna get in the movie. Man, it's gonna be a blast!"

"I know right! I just hope it's good. My roommate saw it yesterday. She said it wasn't bad. Please be good. Please be good."

"I'll buy the tickets and snacks. Salted or caramel?"

"Do you even have to ask?"

"Salted it is."

It's back. Why now? She's right here with me. No. I need to go to her. Where the hell has she run off to. "Laera! Laera!" I need to...

"I'm coming. I'm coming. I'm not going anywhere."

No. No. Get out of the way. Look behind you idiot. Run. Run. I need to save her. This has happened before. Please. Please. Not this time.

"Oh shit."

**

Ow. It hurts. Where am I? Laera. Where's Laera? Is she---

"Don't get up. You're in the hospital. You know, you really are an idiot Reid."

"Ouch... Why?"

"Apparently, a nutter plowed his car in the crowd on the sidewalk outside the theater and killed a bunch of people. If it weren't for you, I would have probably been dead. Seriously, you could have just dove while pushing me forward instead of just taking my place. You are lucky you're not dead!"

She's worried.

“Why the hell are you smiling?”

“Do I look... like a stuntman to you?”

“Still you could have done something to avoid getting injured.”

“Which would be...?”

“Arghh... Leave it. So you saved my life. What do you need?”

“Hmmpphhh. How about din---”

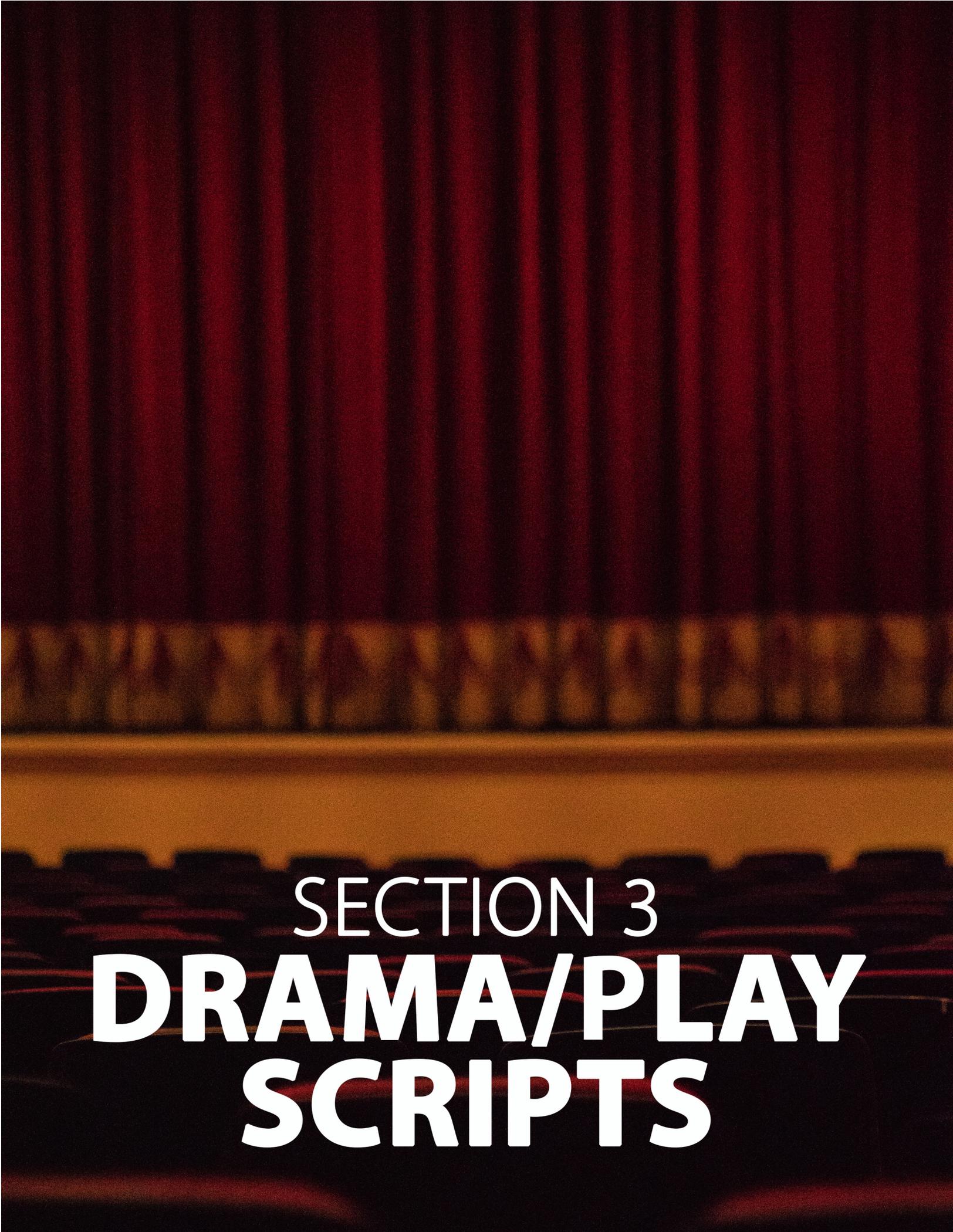
“What? I didn’t get the last part.”

“Dinner.”

I watch her expressions change. She’s trying hard not to smile.

“Sure. After we watch Doctor Strange.”

“Of course. How can we miss that!”

A photograph of a theater stage. The top half of the image shows heavy, dark red curtains hanging vertically. Below the curtains, a horizontal band of light-colored material, possibly a valance or a different type of curtain, is visible. The bottom half of the image shows the dark silhouettes of an audience seated in rows, looking towards the stage. The overall lighting is dim, with a warm, reddish-brown hue from the curtains.

SECTION 3
**DRAMA/PLAY
SCRIPTS**

Fate of the Modern Caesar

By Hoorub Saleem

Bachelor of Studies (Hons) in English Literature, Session: 2018-2022

Dedicated to the “Caesars” that were trialed on the modern battlefield i.e. Twitter....



Characters:

- Brutus
- Cassius
- Julius Caesar
- Marc Antony
- Newscaster
- Protestors holding placards, divided into two groups, supporting Caesar and Brutus respectively.

Disclaimer- Any relevance with any political institution would be entirely coincidental, random, and totally an unplanned one.

Act I

Scene 1

(It's the third anniversary of Caesar's tenure as the country's Prime Minister. A crowd is seen cheering for Caesar in front of his office, Brutus stands in the corner, in a contemplative mood. There should be hard lighting on Brutus' face from the top so that the wrinkles on his forehead become more apparent, adding to his character as a person who "thinks" a lot. Cassius has been staring at Brutus for a while, awaiting the chance to catch him in person. As soon as the crowd disperses, Cassius approaches Brutus and greets him)

Cassius: Good morning, dear Brutus, I've been noticing you for a while now. Why didn't Caesar take you with him on the official tour?

Brutus: *(caught by surprise)* Oh hi Cassius! No, it was supposed to be a high authorities' tour and also Caesar needed somebody who'd take care of the things here, so yes, that's why I preferred to not accompany him on the tour.

Cassius: As if your preference would have made any difference! Come on Brutus, everybody has been seeing how Caesar has changed after you all made him the Prime Minister.

Brutus: No, he hasn't changed. That is just Caesar being Caesar. That is how he has always been. Although all this pressure to run a country that lies on the verge of bankruptcy does take a toll on one's attitude.

Cassius: That is called arrogance, my friend *(says with a smirk)*. Accept this or not, you are just as talented and brilliant as him. When it was me on this seat, I always kept friends like you the closest to me *(looks lustfully on the PM's seat)*.

Brutus: *(Takes a deep sigh)* Cassius, my friend, I wish to confide in you. I would never backbite against Caesar, but I feel he has turned his back on me. He has forgotten it was for allies like me that he got to be the Prime Minister.

Cassius: *(With a conquering smile on his face)* See now you are talking sense! This is the Brutus that I am wont to. Do you see Brutus? Do you see how inflation is skyrocketing? Do you see where unemployment is going? *(Asks this all in one breath)*
(Takes a dramatic pause) People hate Caesar, Brutus, they hate him! Do you want them to hate you as well for supporting him?

Brutus: No, but, wasn't the country worse under your government? Don't you think people hate you too since you...?

Cassius: *(Before Brutus could complete his sentence)* No, no, no, no *(laughs embarrassingly)* People... ahem... *(clears throat)*....People, Brutus, they don't "hate" me! They are just a little disappointed in me. That's it. I can win them back if I'm given a chance again *(smiles cunningly at Brutus)* I mean, "we" can win them back!

(The secretary announces the sudden arrival of Marc Antony, Brutus warns Cassius to stay silent in Antony's presence)

Antony: Friends! *(looks suspiciously at Cassius)* Oh. You are here too Cassius. It's been a long time!

Cassius: Indeed, my dear Marc Antony, indeed. It's been a long time.

(Antony looks at Brutus who seems lost)

Antony: Brutus, Caesar asked me to tell you, he'd be coming back tonight. Everything is good in the office?

Brutus: Absolutely. Everything is well taken care of. Tell Caesar not to worry, Brutus has got his back.

Antony: Very well. I'll take your leave then!

(Antony leaves, Brutus whispers to Cassius)

Brutus: I think I might want to consider your suggestion. It is about my country after all! I know people hate Caesar! *(says this while looking at the crowd that's chanting "We love Caesar" in a sing-song).*

Scene II

(Caesar is sitting alone in his office. To show he has just returned from his official tour, his luggage would be lying right in the room's corner. He is visited by Antony, who is having a hard time telling what has just happened)

Caesar: Talk it out, Antony.

Antony: Caesar, have you ever doubted the loyalty of those around you?

Caesar: Depends on who you are talking about.

Antony: It is Brutus. Today I saw him in a deep discussion with Cassius. You know, since Cassius has joined the opposition, he can go to any extent (looks outside the window)

Caesar: But he can't manipulate Brutus. Antony, Brutus and I, we've spent a lifetime together. I have a blind trust in him.

Antony: Then congratulations Caesar. You've been proved blind in real (*shows his phone's screen to Caesar*). These are Brutus' recent tweets, he has waged a modern war against you.

Caesar: (*Scrolls through the tweets*) Et tu, Brutus? (You too, Brutus?)

(*A complete blackout while a melodramatic tune encompasses the mood of this scene, the tune is only to be played after Caesar has said his line*)

Act II

Scene I

Curtains open with the news that Caesar has been ousted from his office. A newscaster announces the fall of Caesar's government following a series of damaging tweets from his allies, above all, Brutus (accompanied by the shrilling theme music of the news channel). Caesar has been betrayed again. The citizens stand divided into two groups on the stage, one sides with Caesar and holds the placards carrying the hashtag "Imposed government not accepted" while the opposite ones' have "Caesar was selected, not elected!" written on them. The interesting thing is that instead of pouncing on each other, they are engrossed in a Twitter war, everyone's phone is in his hands. (This can be depicted by making twitter's symbolic bird (made on chart paper) fly from one side to another).

Scene II

(Brutus and former allies of Caesar aim to make Cassius the PM again, they stand on the dice, in front of the public, on the other dice, stands Marc Antony all alone, as the spokesperson for Caesar's government. There is pin drop silence and a distinctive tension in the air, everyone stands and awaits the next move)

(The people in the crowd are supposed to make noise before and after Brutus' speech)

Brutus: My dear countrymen, I stand here today to make the reasons known, for which Caesar was ousted from his office. I, and the people who stand behind me, we've been with Caesar through thick and thin, we've loved him, but he has taken all of this to his head. Your Brutus cares about the unbelievably high inflation rate under Caesar's government. We have seen the youth scavenging the depths of newspapers for jobs, we've seen the unprecedented increase in corruption cases (*takes a pause*). Trust me, we've seen it all. This is why your Brutus stands here today, and attempts to be as "neutral" as possible towards Caesar, the same Caesar he once loved infinitely and unconditionally.

(Brutus is supposed to speak these last lines in a way that the audience can feel that he might seem rather passionate towards his career, but somewhere, deep in his heart, he feels sorry for Caesar. It's more like him justifying his acts to himself)

(Brutus looks at Marc Antony, the stage is his now, people have started raising slogans against Caesar, Antony lets them finish and patiently awaits his turn)

Antony: Friends, countrymen, and keyboard warriors! Although Caesar is safe and sound, this day marks his political murder. In Cassius' regime, the inflation rate was twice as high and the country's economy was thrown into the darkest pit of the stock market. Still, Brutus says that it was Caesar who couldn't control inflation, which is right, considering Brutus is the most "neutral" person here.

When everybody was using IOS software, it was Caesar, my dear people, who was content with Android, yet Brutus says that Caesar was "ambitious", which definitely (*with a subtly sarcastic tone*) sits right coming from a person as neutral as Brutus.

(With a louder voice) My countrymen, lend me your ears. The people Brutus is standing up for, the same people are so considerate when it comes to the proletariat class, that they don't save their money here in our banks so that the cashier's fingers don't get fatigued after counting all that cash, instead they head for the Swiss banks. Such are their ways, and rightfully so, a neutral person like Brutus is supporting them.

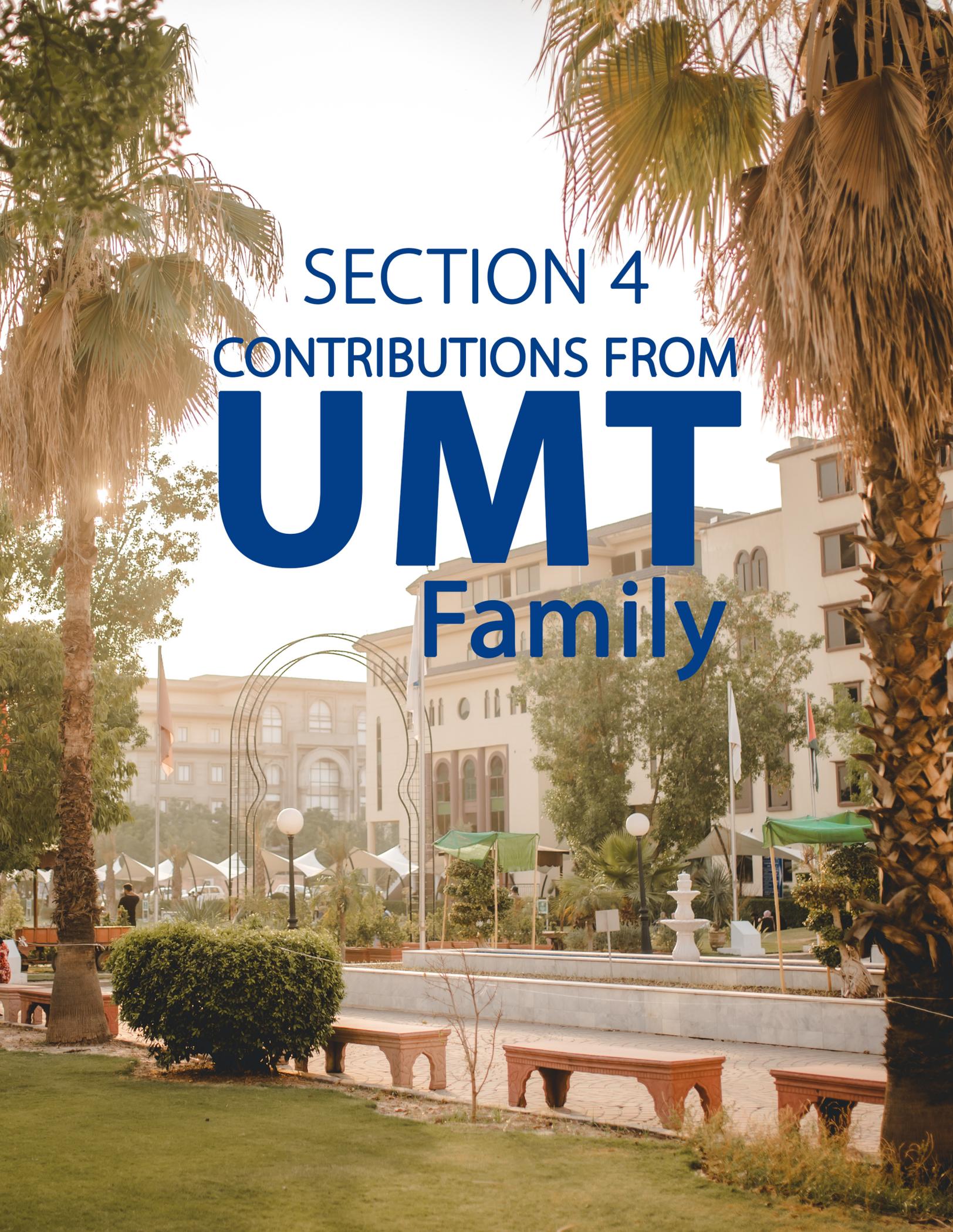
(The crowd's noise starts fading away at a glacial pace, the noise gets replaced by a reflecting silence)

(Antony looks at the crowd, observes them, and pauses to pull himself together)

Pardon me, for I know one needn't shout to be heard, but what else one's supposed to do when it's not only the PM's seat that is vacant, but people's hearts as well, which, unlike the government, can't be neutralized.

(Anthony leaves the stage, Brutus is left alone on the dice with his supporters, the audience looks at them with accusing eyes)

(Ends with the falling of stage drapes)

A photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there are several large palm trees and a paved walkway with orange-colored benches. In the middle ground, there is a large, multi-story building with arched windows and a central entrance. A decorative metal archway stands in front of the building. The sky is bright and clear. The text "SECTION 4 CONTRIBUTIONS FROM UMT Family" is overlaid in blue on the image.

SECTION 4
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
UMT
Family

Coming of Age

By Dr. Nadia Anwar

Chairperson, DELS and Acting Dean, ILA

Sunned through time
I ripe.
Mellowed to the bones.
My words a monotone.
I see and let the world go by.
Unperturbed, I leave behind
the vagaries of life.

The people too,
For they still need to grow.
They eye me with frown,
Perchance, I may step upon their little joys
And mar their juvenile dreams.

They do not know,
That I also dreamed and beamed
through mirthful times.
With mindless banter, I too,
Wasted the quarter of my life.
To me too was unknown the pain
That thickens the days to halt.

But at least, I stopped.
Even though they were short
I sucked those moments
That taught me to be true.

Now, like an old snapper
I pop my head, look around
And take my way
Certain, that I matured with dignity
And not in disgrace.

White Tree

By Dr. Tamsila Naeem

Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics & Communications, ILA

I stayed in the falling snow in the coldest time of the year
Viewing the white trees with bended arms in fear
Wet with regrets to see the coldness of the ground
Full of speckled bones of melodic birds all around
On the waves of gray fumes swaying in the whirlpools
I rowed my vessel to the land full of gems and jewels
I thought of the days your eyes gladdened my face
Uttering words of care that heightened my grace
And then your last words not uttered by your eyes
Which often swim to and fro on waves of sobs and sighs
And your smile, which was as sunny as it was ever
Turned into the numbest thing on the earth however
I watched it standing like a dismal bird in the frost
Fallen from its abode in toxic faintness and exhaust
Come back and wiggle hard this white crusty tree
Shuddering it to shed its worn abundance to bury me!

Thoughts after Storm

By Tazeen Bokhari

Lecturer, Department of English & Literary Studies, ILA

Illuminating orbs oozed
burning sparks from
endless wells. Thin,
dark lashed
circumference the
burning passion;
that mercuric intensity
was set to crush
a diamond.

17/ 02/18

Offer

By Muhammad Saleh Habib

Lecturer, Department of English & Literary Studies, ILA

All that I have to offer you,
from this beaten and broken heart.
Is my love... nothing else...
To you, it may not be much.

But to me,
It is everything.
It is everything!

Poesy, what?

By Zunaira Shafiq

Lecturer, Department of English & Literary Studies, ILA

Poetry is a false notion
Lust disguised as a sacred emotion
Lies ornamented before they are spoken
Art faked as an intimate devotion
Lascivious desires expressed with a caution
Act as an enchanting potion.

All you need is an incentive to begin,
And there you have deceptive illusions interwoven!

But at times as great as the ocean
Too deep to be understood, too vague to be spoken.
When there's something inside broken,
And left with no other option
Having no one to show your wounds open
The soul is chained and sounds are frozen.

All you need is a moment to begin,
And there you have the bitter complexities interwoven!

ELEGY: Dedicated to (late) Dr. Hassan Sohaib Murad

By Mah-e-Nao

Lecturer, Department of English & Literary Studies, ILA

Confronting numbness in the season of spring
 Not knowing how to express everything
 As losing you in this sun-kissed state
 Have burdened me with myriad weight
 Thus penning down the deep elegies-
 To express the unsaid, weighed melodies

How to be so gentle and kind
 I learned from you all the times
 The way you conversed, melted the hearts
 Holds you as a period of influencing arts
 You were the guide for future generations
 Messiah of countless injudicious nations
 It is all your embrasure and exposure
 That marked you as an epitome of treasure!

Oh I still remember how you concluded
 That powerful speech, that interlude
 The institute was your newborn child
 Now stumbling, wandering, left beguiled
 She enters your office and speaks to the walls
 Inhales the scholarly fragrance of your gentle calls
 Sits under the shadows of the trees you sowed
 And submits herself to knees, avowed!

Exploring the one who fans your memories-

Searching for you in buried directories
Paving the ways with all you taught,
For all those who feel being caught
Concealed in darkness, minds bulldozed
Intellectual faculties being decomposed.

My mighty objections to the earth and sky,
Believing souls are mortal, destined to die
But he was a soul made of flowers
Wouldn't have faded within a few hours
It was enough to have us maddened
If only it had never happened!

In Defense of History

By Rabia Saleem

Language Editor, Knowledge and Research Support Services (KRSS), UMT

They say there are two sides to each story; one that is told and one that is untold. Both stories share equal space in our memories; however, one is always given precedence, while the other is left forgotten. There are many explanations for this ambiguity. One that is widely accepted is that history is written by the victors, their bias molds the stories passed on to the present. This could be considered true in times of war, but what of our capitalist and globalized world? There are no winners or losers in our world so where do we point our fingers? What or who causes ambiguity in our history? Who chooses which memories should be told and which should remain untold? Since it is from the individual that memory arises, I shall take my own experience as a starting point to seek the answers.

As far as I can remember, my memory has always been a fickle mistress. Its forgetful nature has affected my memories greatly, especially the memory of my paternal grandfather. To me, he had always been a selfless man, he would often give coins to little children and financially help the people of his local village. He gave and gave, there was no end to his generosity. However, he did have a bad habit of forgetting. He would often pray and take his medicine twice. Sometimes, he would open the wrong door thinking it would lead him elsewhere. Our family never named his forgetfulness, we just put it off as old-age antics. As I grew older, I found out through research that he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, which causes progressive memory loss. In the light of this information, I came to doubt my grandfather's giving nature. Even after his death, I would often ponder about his illness. I wondered whether his giving nature was the result of forgetfulness or it was based on actual selfless acts.

Today, if someone would ask me to describe my grandfather, I would say that he was an altruistic soul. Albeit, I would be hesitant to add that he was also a patient of onset dementia, and his giving nature just might be the result of his forgetfulness. I

deliberately try to only remember him through rose-colored lenses so I don't slip up. I would rather people remember him as a kind soul. I wondered how many other memories I had unintentionally modified or forgotten. It was an unconscious act of forgetting that shaped the memories of my grandfather. It was a failure of memory of sorts, so can we consider memory at fault here? It all boils down to this one question, are discrepancies in our history just simple acts of forgetting?

The saying goes that 'the act of forgetting is not a failure of memory', rather it is a disremembering, 'a component of memory itself'. Humans control their memory as much as they control their own acts. However, unlike the mechanisms of remembering, such as mnemonics, monuments, celebrations, memorials, and literature, memory studies describe the mechanism of forgetting as something that lies within the reproduction of mechanisms of remembering. If I had to put it simply, the more you remember a certain event of the past through memorials or celebrations, the more you forget what lies beyond these events. This would not stop at a personal level, no. History itself would be shaped by these mechanisms of remembering. In the past, the mechanisms of remembering have been deliberately used to modify history on several occasions.

I have seen this happen in my own country. The history of Pakistan has been forged and reproduced by history textbooks. It has caused its citizens to forget about certain events. For example, the Partition of 1947 did not happen solely due to the religious divide between Muslims and Hindus, rather the divide was cultivated deliberately by the British for their own agenda. Other causes such as language, location, and culture, also led to the partition. However, in our society, the focus on the religious divide has resulted in convoluted hatred between India and Pakistan. To this day, our history is still being shaped by the reproduction of such faulty literature, its inaccuracies plague each and every Pakistani citizen. Even if one tries to counter this manipulation, one unconsciously becomes affected by the memory of the past that one has been presented with. Who is to blame for such memory modification? At this juncture, can we consider society to be the culprit that created our twisted history?

Many 20th century philosophers agree that memories are acquired through the collective memory of our society. One such philosopher, Maurice Halbwachs, writes about this very fact in *On Collective Memory*. He says that society picks out the memories that should be framed and reproduced; it is also a society that selects and discards certain memories so they might be forgotten. The selection process for memories that need to be kept or discarded depends on the end result. If some memories are better left forgotten, then they are discarded by societies through mechanisms of remembering and forgetting. However, in my experience of the past, this memory modification exists at both individual and societal levels. My memories of my grandfather were distorted due to my bias, I wanted him to be remembered as a good person. Similarly, Pakistani society created the Muslim and Hindu divide in the past because they wanted to create a monolithic Islamic state. From these scenarios, one can deduce that the distortion of history is simply not the result of an individual's failure of memory or society itself, but something more. It is a need to acquire the best we can from the present, regardless of its future consequences. It is much like greed in a sense; we replace our own memories with memories that have been crafted with fake information because we desire immediate personal, cultural, economic, ethnic, or religious success. The consequence of such greed is pronounced now more than ever.

In 2003, the SARS outbreak in China caused mass panic throughout the world. Dr Jiang Yanyong, the person who revealed the government's cover-up about the severity of this disease, has been kept in captivity by the government to this day. The SARS virus outbreak led to more than 8000 cases and 700 deaths worldwide. No vaccine was developed for SARS, but due to climatic changes the virus soon died. The news about this dangerous virus was soon forgotten. At the start of 2020, a new virus originated from China known as the Coronavirus. Lei Wenliang, the Chinese doctor who warned the government about the severity of the Coronavirus, was also considered a rumourmonger. He was called to the Public Security Bureau and made to sign legal papers to ensure his silence on this issue. Just like Dr Yanyong, he was also silenced. The Chinese government fought tooth and nail to hide any news about the Coronavirus.

They asked to delete TV footage, censored online content and spread wrong information, declaring that the Coronavirus was nothing more than Pneumonia. However, the situation soon got out of control and the deadly virus spread all over the world. It is important to note that in an attempt to save its own economy, the Chinese government hid true information and reproduced falsified information, not once, but twice. By replacing true information with false information, they significantly affected the history of humanity.

In the same manner, the history of the globalized world is being modified with knowledge, which in turn is being manipulated, held back, and modified to satiate our greed. It is being sold out in a game of 'naked information monopoly', as Yu Ping, a Metropolis Daily Reporter, points out. In the end, only handpicked information is shared with us, while the rest is put aside to be forgotten. In order to keep us ignorant of what has been put aside, we are kept busy with the mechanics of remembering a past that is made up of handpicked information. The result of which is disastrous, as can be seen in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is quite shocking that it is simply not I, who has forgotten my past in exchange for personal gain, rather we, as a society, have given up on our past for immediate personal, economic, religious, and cultural success, regardless of its future consequences. We can't point our finger at anyone for the creation of such dubious history but ourselves and our insatiable greed. We can only seek to overcome it in order to defend our true history, lest we repeat our mistakes and dig a deeper hole .

Acknowledgments

Works consulted include the BBC website: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-51403795>; Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Liedeke Playe. "Amnesiology: Towards the Study of Cultural Oblivion." *Memory Studies* (2017) *SAGE Journals*. 21 May 2020. <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177-/1750698015596016>>; Rodrigo Teixeira. "The Commodification of Knowledge and Information." *The Oxford Handbook of Karl Marx* (2018) *Oxford Handbooks Online*. 21 May 2020. <<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190695545.001.0001-/oxfordhb-9780190695545-e-23>>

Grieve to Grieving

By Safia Iqbal

Research Associate, Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC)

From the café's corner table, on a fine evening, everyone could easily listen to their thought-provoking discussion. "At the heart of what we have called the Harlem Renaissance, I assure you, something good is going to happen soon."

Suddenly, the other one shouted, "Oh my brother...!! By putting yourself in my shoes, you are going to understand the ball game. How can anyone feel for a poor black man?"

"Oh my brother, relax! The grief you know is a grief that we know. Don't you know that out of the same bitter cup we drink?"

A sigh of relief with grief.....!!

She entered quietly. The café went silent. Ebony legs trembled; resolve did not. She asked for a coffee but the sign declared, "**Whites Only**".

Books and My Folk

By Shahan Pervez

Lecturer, Department of English & Literary Studies, ILA

For four years, I kept reminding my cousin Shazy to read *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. I emphasized that it was written for teenagers to help them improve their lives. He always replied, "Acha." He did not read the book. It's not that he had to go through the trouble of buying the book. I placed the book in his room, but he never bothered to pick it up. Even holding the book seemed like a laborious task to him.

I also explained the book's primary ideas to show him how valuable the book was. I told him how that book was assisting me in performing better at the university, but nothing convinced him. I was trying to create a need for him but failed.

He was squandering his life. He was brilliant, but he was sluggish and unwilling to put his intelligence to use. He skipped college whenever he pleased, frequently spent nights with his friends, and arrived home in the morning by climbing the gate. He would be unconcerned about putting in extra effort at college. At home, he would play video games to kill time.

I believed that *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* could help him become focused. The book could provide him a direction. This book helped me choose loyal friends and break manipulative friendships. It also helped me to become a goal achiever. I believe that if I am a gold medalist, it is because of the role *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* played. I am thankful to my psychologist brother, who read this book and recommended it. I might not have reached my goals if I hadn't read this book.

Good books can transform your life. They can leave a positive impact or provide motivation, yet we do not like to read books. My cousin's attitude toward books is the attitude of most Pakistanis. During my M. Phil, I discovered numerous surveys and researches. According to them, just five percent of Pakistanis are keen readers, and

only twenty percent read newspapers or Sunday magazines. Half of our population is illiterate, and those who can read despise reading. It's a pity we don't have a reading culture. We're missing out on so much. Books can teach us many things. They can assist us in developing strong personalities. They can aid us in forming constructive habits. They have the power to enlighten us and put us on the right track. They can educate us on how to handle different situations in our lives.

Some books that facilitated me are *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, *The Road Less Travelled*, *Awaken the Giant Within*, *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*, and *Platonic Dialogues*.

These books have really been useful to me in a variety of ways. Why not learn from the expertise of others? Why not be motivated to perform better in life? Why not seek assistance in better understanding ourselves and others? Why not study how to nurture healthy relationships when we know we can't survive without them? Why not learn to accomplish your life goals and become more productive? Why not find out how to make your marriage work? Why not understand how to raise a child? Why not heal yourself by reading?

As a university student, I always saw the library abandoned except during the examination week. Books were left alone, never to be touched. During the summer, students would occasionally gather there to socialize and have fun. The librarians would shush them.

I was reading Salman Rashid's pieces for my M. Phil thesis. One of them was about libraries. He admits he was not a good student, and his education did not take place at school. Libraries of Punjab educated him. After reading his travelogs, I discovered how scholarly he was. He is a gifted creative writer, and he owes it to books. His knowledge and skills in imparting knowledge motivated me.

Most of our Pakistani students would spend money, eating at a well-known restaurant, going on a trip, or shopping at popular malls or marketplaces. They don't mind spending thirty thousand rupees on branded clothes or the same amount on a new gadget. They

don't worry about spending ten thousand rupees on a single meal at a decent restaurant or twenty thousand rupees at a party, but when they visit a bookshop and see that a book is worth 1,000 rupees, they complain about it, "The book is costly. Why are books so expensive?"

They would not purchase a book. Students spend a fortune on food and clothes but would not spend a thousand rupees on a book that could positively impact their lives.

I listened to some talks by Professor Jordan Peterson. He is a clinical psychologist and a published author. People approached him during a talk and thanked him for his book, *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*. Reading his book changed their lives; they lived in darkness and came out because of his book's hope, motivation, and guidance. Some expressed he was the father they never had. He became a fatherly figure to them because of his book's inspiration and message that they could still make something of their lives despite the horrors that visited them. His book assisted them in putting themselves together, but we are not interested in improving our lives. We are already perfect. We don't need any motivation.

We're not interested in our mental growth. We are not interested in evolving critical minds through books. We are interested in movies instead. We love parties. We love spending money on food or shopping. We love watching Netflix. Who has time to read books? I worship my phone and always crave it. I'm curious to see what my friends are up to on social media. I want to play video games. I'd rather spend 60,000 rupees on a play station than 1,000 rupees on a book. Who needs books?

I am thankful to all the authors whose books have assisted me in shaping my life. To me, the world's treasure of good books resembles an ocean. If we want to grow mentally and expand our horizons, we must dive into the ocean of knowledge. My Folk seem happy in their world where books have no place.

About "The Literary Fulcrum"

The Literary Fulcrum (TLF) is the Annual Literary Magazine of the Department of English and Literary Studies (DELS) which caters to the following genres of literary and creative writings:

- Poetry
- Short Stories
- Non-Fiction Prose
- Comic Fiction
- Drama/Plays
- Travelogs
- Literature of the Pandemic
- Argumentative Writings: Speeches/Debates

Submission Guidelines

Authors are required to send submissions by following the given guidelines:

1. Manuscripts should be in proper English with a special focus on grammar and vocabulary.
2. Manuscripts should adhere to the standard format of their chosen genre of writing, for example, a short story should contain its essential constituents: setting, characterization, dialogue, conflict, and resolution. The same applies to other literary genres such as plays and comic fiction.
3. Essays, Travelogs (1st person/ 3rd Person), Non-Fiction Prose, and Argumentative Writings should contain a logical sequence of writing e.g. Introduction, Middle, and Conclusion.
4. The authors are encouraged to make abundant use of literary devices, especially in fictional pieces, to enhance their work.
5. All submissions (apart from poems) must be of a reasonable length. The preferred word limit of prose works is 1000-1500.
6. The authors must clearly mention their affiliation: name, designation (in case of faculty or staff), batch, and program of study on the manuscript.
7. **IMPORTANT: Authors are requested to send no more than 2 manuscripts for review for each issue.**
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Review Process

The reviewing process will be completed within a few weeks after which the authors will receive detailed feedback on their work along with the editors' decision. It is advised that the manuscript be thoroughly proofread before submission to avoid any inconvenience.

PATRON'S MESSAGE

The Literary Fulcrum is an avenue of expression of the highest and deepest emotions of human experiences. I strongly believe that the magazine will contribute vastly to promote the vision of the humanities of bringing people together through the power of words and the wisdom they offer to our hearts, minds, and souls.

Prof. Dr. Asif Raza

Rector, University of Management and Technology, Lahore

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