"From the President’s Desk…”

Ms. Kala Vijayakumar

This quarter seems to belong to the students. Students’ interest in societal welfare is evident from their papers on ‘Navigational Assistance for the blind’, ‘Elaboration of Child Labour’, ‘Power Regeneration for Electric cars’ and Text to speech conversion methods. Congrats to all those who have contributed towards the same. This is the season when students are busy in preparing for their examinations. Yet, it is appreciated that our sports persons, Irfan Hussain and Anaka, continue to hold the flag high by their successes in Table Tennis and Squash.

I congratulate Dr Alphin M.S and Dr Balaji M. who have earned their PhD Degree during this quarter. The Department of CSE needs specific mention for organizing a well participated International Conference on Recent Advances in Computing and Software Systems. All of us can be proud that our college has been rated successively as the Top Institute of India, by the Competition Success Review. I am glad to find that our faculty is keen on studying Wind energy as a viable source of energy, especially when we are power starved. I am also happy to find the continued interest of our Alumni in associating themselves in the publication of scientific articles, besides a large number of publications by our faculty and students. I congratulate the Alumni, faculty and students for their continued contributions for the welfare of the society.

What is important is not what we have accomplished for ourselves, but what we have accomplished for others, and whether we have accomplished what is possible within our full capacity. We need to focus our energy on developing our loyalties. Our loyalty is not solely to the self, to the institution, or the society, but to our value-system. If the value-system harmoniously blends with the value system of the society, much good will issue forth irrespective of age or talent.

"From the Principal’s Desk…”

Dr. S. Salivahanan

The 16th College Day, celebrated with Mr. Suresh Jandhyala, Director General of Income Tax (Inv.), Chennai, as the Chief Guest on 10 April 2012 marked the end of the academic year 2011-2012. This very moment let me welcome the academic year 2012-2013!

With pleasure, I hereby record the activities of SSN Institutions in the second quarter— April, May and June 2012.

It was a matter of great pride for me, to be present at the “CSR Awards Night,” in Delhi on 28 April 2012, where SSN College of Engineering received the “Top Institute of India” Award instituted by Competition Success Review (CSR).

The Department of CSE organized an International Conference on “Recent Advances in Computing and Software Systems (RACSS 2012)” on 26 & 27 April 2012. The conference drew 370 technical papers from which 81 papers were selected after careful review by a panel and published in IEEE Xplore Digital Library. Pre-conference tutorials were conducted on 25th in the topics of Demystifying Cloud Service Models and Machine Learning with Image Processing Applications. Eminent speakers from IBM Research India, Microsoft Research, eBay, IIT Madras, Anna University, NIT Trichy, University of Melbourne Australia have delivered talks. RACSS 2012 was technically co-sponsored by IEEE Madras Section, IEEE Computer Society, Madras Chapter and Computer Society of India, Chennai Chapter. It was financially sponsored by CSI Special Interest Group in Software Engineering (SIGSE). Corporate sponsors include the Gold Sponsor, Cognizant, Silver Sponsors, HCL Technologies; Redington India Limited, Sba Infosolutions Limited, Stratus Technologies and the Conference Kit Sponsor, eBay India Product Center, Chennai.

The Department of Chemical Engineering conducted a two-day national seminar on “Recent Advancements in Air Pollution Control (RAAPC)” sponsored by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), New Delhi, on 10 &11 April 2012.

I appreciate the efforts of the Department of English in organizing the second workshop on “Communication Skills” for the Non-teaching Staff of SSN on 28 April 2012 and a workshop on “Teaching Methodologies” for the faculty of SSN on 23 & 24 May 2012.

The Department of EEE conducted a one-day workshop on “Logic BOTS”, under I-Cell on 15 June 2012.

Irfan Hussain, II B.E. (Mech.) needs special mention here for receiving the Best University Players Award from the Tamilnadu Tennis Association during the Annual Award Function on 14 April 2012.

My appreciation goes to the faculty who have published technical papers in international journals. It is also nice to know that a couple of our faculty earned their Ph.D. degree recently. With this, over 45% of SSNCE faculty have become doctorates.

My mind brings me to a quote of Henry Ford, which I believe you should be aware of, “Whether you think you can or think you can’t, either way you are right.” When Henry ford was bringing his vision of the motor vehicle into the world, people around ridiculed him for his wild dream. But he was sure he could achieve and he did achieve. People usually underestimate how talented they are. It is necessary for every person to believe that he is a genius beyond description. Once that belief is embedded in him he can work wonders. I request the staff and students to believe in themselves and realize what they want to.
SSN COLLEGE DAY CELEBRATIONS

SSN Institutions celebrated its College Day on 10th April 2012. The function, attended by students, staff, parents and guests, concluded with a cultural extravaganza that showcased the multifarious talents of the students in the form of dance, music etc.

The College felicitated and awarded outstanding achievements in academics, extra-curricular activities and sports. The first two rank holders of all the semesters for the year 2011-2012 were given medals – 80 Gold medals and 113 Silver medals. The award for the best outgoing student of the college was given to Suneesh Kaul of the Mechanical Engineering Department. Awards were also given to the best outgoing student of each department.

SSN College emphasizes the importance of the all-round development of students by encouraging participation in extracurricular activities and sports along with academics. The cultural background of SSN exposes the students to various student activity clubs through which they can engage themselves in their special interests and thus develop their talents.

Dr. S. Salivahanan, Principal, presented the annual report and congratulated the achievers. The Chief Guest, Mr Suresh Jandhyala, Director General of Income Tax (Irtv.), Chennai, commended the college for its top-class facilities, its highly qualified faculty, and its enduring knowledge and research centers all of which combined provided the students with a valuable and rich learning-experience. He congratulated the college on its ability to create equal opportunities amongst all segments of the community through various schemes like the merit-cum-means, sports, and rural scholarships. He encouraged the students to broaden their horizons and knowledge, and build a multifarious personality. He emphasized the importance of patience, perseverance and self-confidence. He concluded by saying, “India stands on the threshold of a fantastic future and you will be the heroes of its success story. Remember that you are the architects of your future and out-of-the-box thinking is the road to success. So dare to dream and pursue your dreams relentlessly.”

Ms. Kala Vijayakumar, President, appreciated the students on their performance and encouraged them to continue making the best use of the learning environment granted to them by the college.

SPORTS DAY - 2012

Our college celebrated the 13th annual sports meet on the 27th of March on the college premises. Ms. Joshna Chinnappa, international squash player declared the sports day open. The President, Ms. Kala Vijayakumar, the Principal Dr. S. Salivahanan, and Board Member Mr. P. Siva Prasad were also present during the ceremony.

A. Anaka, first B.E. (CSE), Asian Junior squash Champion received the Olympic torch from Ms. Joshna Chinnappa and the Olympic oath was taken by Irfan Hussain, II B.E. (Mech), International tennis star. The march past shield went to PG students and the runners-up were YRC. The Chief Guest gave away the Individual Championship Award for Men to M. Jeffrey, second B.E. (EEE). The individual championship for women was given to M. Geetha, first B.E. (ECE).

The overall championship was bagged by the second years -- Yellow house, though by a negligible margin. Dr. P. Balaji, Physical Director, read the annual sports report, and N. Aravinth, final B.Tech. (IT), the Sports Secretary proposed the vote of thanks.


“Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.”

- Samuel Johnson

• Everything is changeable, everything appears and disappears; there is no blissful peace until one passes beyond the agony of life and death.
• time, the mud settles down and the water regains clarity. Similarly, when human mind is disturbed, it manifests itself in fear, anger, greed, hate and so on. The best way to overcome the problems will be to give oneself clarity and peace of mind.

- Gautama Siddharta Buddha


ABSTRACT

Treasure hunt stories are very popular. Pirates with eye patches, an iron leg with an unmistakable green parrot on his shoulder embarking on long sea voyages, enduring blistering winds and the wrath of storms……all for the desirable ‘X’ mark on the map-the treasure chest brimming with gold. These are age old stories commonly depicted in cartoons and story books. The hunt for glittering gold has always had its own air of magic and mystery and a childish temptation that captivates a young, wandering mind.

Surely people would have heard the story of a poor farmer ploughing his field on a sunny day and suddenly unearthing a pot of gold from his land……..or jewellery hidden in the walls of a hut…….. All on the saga for money.

With intense care, I slowly pulled out the drawer. It opened very slowly and required a lot of effort. Apparently it hadn't been opened for years – it was now rotted away with termites. With much patience, we let all its contents come into view. I expected gold or money or precious stones like any other discoverer would in an ancient, untouched house would, but guess what I had revealed?

In direct view lay an old, faded top with its paint falling off, a torn kite, an unfigurable toy with broken parts and In direct view lay an old, faded top with its paint falling off, a torn kite, an unfigurable toy with broken parts and patches, an iron leg with an unmistakable green parrot into view. I expected gold or money or precious stones like any other discoverer would in an ancient, untouched house would, but guess what I had revealed?

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I blinked. It was dark and wet. I blinked again. I was lying upside down and couldn't make out anything in the dark. I stretched my legs but stopped short. Something was right in front of me. I felt safe though. A sweet voice was floating in the air. I went back to sleep softly.

I blinked. It was bright, very bright. The light stung my eyes. It was warm too. The air was dry and free. The wetness around me was drying up. Long pale faces were looking upon me. They seemed happy. Their eyes were shining. I was scared though. I cried and kicked, shouting in fear. And then I saw this face. A face I knew I would never forget. She reached for me and held me soft and safe. All my fear lapsed and I went back to sleep holding her little finger.

I blinked. She was now looking over me, beaming. I saw her lips move trying to tell me something. I reached my hand out for it and moved my lips too. She cried in surprise. Strong glee shone through her eyes. I spoke again. She kissed all over my face with slow soft wet kisses. That was one joyous face.

I blinked. It was an early morning. Sun rays carried sweet sparrow talk to my room. I got down from bed. I could smell the aroma of freshly baked vanilla cakes. It was my 3rd birthday. I ran to the kitchen and saw her singing in a sweet tone. I wrapped my arms around her soft pudgy legs. I inhaled a whiff of innocent cherry blossom. She ruffled my hair and gave me a shiny wrapped present. I smiled back at her. I loved that face.

I blinked. It was scary. I was surrounded by many new faces. A knot was growing in my stomach. Her face was sunken and had moist eyes. She stood far and was moving farther. She waved watching me go. Her face was confused. I couldn't tell if she was happy or sad. I was upset and did not want to let her go. I kept waving at her as the school van turned at a corner and sped off.

I blinked. The full moon was shining bright. I was amazed at how that face could reflect so much shine back. That shy looking mole on her upper lip was shining bright too. I put my arms around her waist and inhaled a load of cherry blossom. Dozing off to sleep softly.

I blinked. I was jealous. My hands were itching and my legs shaking. I saw a tiny little marvel, lying so close to her. It was a baby boy. Her face was happy and filled with joy. Looking at that tiny sprout, I wanted to push him away badly and lie next to her instead, but I knew I couldn't. I turned around and stomped off.

I blinked. I was extremely happy. Not for the fact that I topped a state level quiz competition but that she had her arms around me and hugged tight. I felt so warm and cozy. I could smell her cherry blossom fragrance all around me. I softly pushed her away and run towards my other classmates to boast off. I saw that face beaming.

I blinked. My heart was racing. She hadn't slept the previous night. I kept refreshing the web page while she made me milk, praying simultaneously. I silently drank my milk and in anxiety waited for the results to turn up. Her face was the most intense ever.

I blinked. She was standing across the rails. She had the same look the time when I first left her for school. Yet, her face seemed to be more mature and controlled. My mind was too full to reciprocate. I was finally through to my dream college. New people and new environment waited for me on the other end. My heart reached for her, but I asked it to stay still. I can never forget that longing happy face.

I blinked. She looked at us and was shocked. A dry lump was stuck in my throat. I felt torn. I can never forget that longing for replaced love. The other love of my life stood next to me, waiting for me to say something. I looked at that face, the one I had known so well, so long that my mind knew every single curve, mole and strand of hair, and I looked at the other face soft, loving and new, infusing me with a cocktail of emotions every time I adorned her. I had to decide between them.

I blinked. I knew she was upset. I knew she was trying so hard to keep it down. Life is always unfair. I simply let go of it and tried to lived the moment. Though the thought of her face unhinged me, it was my wedding day.

I blinked. She wasn't responding. I kept shaking her and crying out her name. My mom had fainted off at home. The doctor said she had had her first heart attack. I was crushed. She was in a lot of pain yet lay quiet in an isolated bed in the ICU. The bed was surrounded by strange equipments buzzing and beeping. My head started spinning. I made a quick thousand promises to God in return for her recovery.

I blinked in happiness. A little tear flew out of my eye. The love of my life was sleeping in a plain full length gown. Mom was holding my daughter wrapped in a fresh cotton cloth. I could finally see a smile on her face. I missed that face for a long time. I held her hand and pressed it softly naming my kid after her.

I blinked. She looked peaceful and complete. I tasted salt from the tears that rolled off from my eyes. My wife leaned over me, squeezing my arm. I murmured ‘mam’ softly, hoping she would hear and react. She had left us peacefully, never bothering to disturb us like we did to her all the time. That face, that stunning round spectacle, I will never lose its memory.

I blinked. She had come back in my dream. She had held me and was singing a soft lullaby. I then fall down a deep dark hole reaching out for her. I woke up sweating like every other night.

I blinked. The phone rang. I reached for it and realized it was the middle of the night. My son in law was on the other end. He told me I had become a grandfather. A little boy had been born. I asked for my daughter. I had named her after my mother. She reminded me of her. We spoke only a little though. She said she had had her first heart attack. I was crushed. She was in a lot of pain yet lay quiet in an isolated bed in the ICU. The bed was surrounded by strange equipments buzzing and beeping. My head started spinning. I made a quick thousand promises to God in return for her recovery.

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I blinked. I saw my face covered with bright white stubble in the mirror. It took me 15 minutes to rise from bed every day. My trousers and skin both hung loose and were baggy. The pillow next to mine was unused for a long time, yet its memory hung around. She was a wife, a mother. I too had a mother. It was a long time back. She smelled sweet and was too. I sometimes miss her. I think she had a mole or two above her lips somewhere.

Mohamed Refai Mohamed Irfan
IV B.E.(BME)
PHOTO GALLERY

Dignitaries at the 16th College Day Celebrations

Mr. Suneesh Kaul, III B.E. (Mechanical Engg.) receives the Best Outgoing Student of SSNCE

First batch of Rural Government School Toppers Scholarship Holders give a thanks giving ceremony to their mentors

Cultural Programme at the College Day Celebrations

The March Past during the Sports Day Celebrations

PHOTO GALLERY
Ms. Anaka Alakamony, I B.E. (CSE), Ace Squash Player Crowned The Asian Junior Championship

The Women Individual Championship for sports goes to Ms. M. Geetha, II B.E. (ECE)

The Men Individual Championship for sports goes to Mr. M. Jeffery Navraj Richards, II B.E. (EEE)

The III B.E. / B.Tech. Students won the Overall Championship for the year 2012

SSN YRC Visit Arul Illam orphanage.

Tug of War during Sports Day

PHOTO GALLERY
Julian Herschel looked back at the Yaroslavsky railway station for one last time. The station clock indicated that it was almost midnight and the damp platform had begun to assume a dreary look with the hordes of passengers teeming about the train Rossiya.

“About time”, muttered Julian to himself as he grabbed his hefty travel bag in his left hand. He was twenty five years old and almost six feet tall, leanly built. He cut the figure of a veteran traveller with his black leather coat and spectacles glinting in the light. Yet his sable attire and his raven-black hair gave him a rather grim demeanour.

He turned towards the train itself, a huge segmented metal snake with horizontal blue and red bars running across its full length. He moved towards the train and settled himself in his second class compartment berth. It was a small four-berth room inside the train with a metal door leading into the train’s corridor.

Soon, the train’s calliopean horn pierced the night and the train Rossiya started its 9,258 kilometre seven-day journey from Moscow to Vladivostok, the lordly city on the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

~*~

The train was in the second day of its journey, departing from the city of Yekaterinburg by the time someone else entered his room inside the train.

She was a tall girl, with auburn hair. She was a couple of years younger than him. She opened his room door suddenly and asked him something in an unintelligible language. Then she switched to English and said,

“My upper-seat berth in the other side of the train is broken and I don’t know where else I can stay on this damned train for the next few days. Just let me stay in this place. I won’t be bothering you or anything!” pleaded the girl.

Julian finally nodded and she gave a big sigh of relief. She began to stow away her luggage and then took out a professional-looking camera when she was done, finally before sitting down in front of him. After almost an hour, her patience broke.

“Hi. I am Catherine Rost. I am from Arizona. What about you?” said the girl.

“I am Julian Herschel. I am from London”, he curtly replied.

“Well, I am a photographer. I’m free-lancing for National Geographic. I spent the past week in the Urals, taking loads of pictures of the great things in the vicinity. I am headed out to Lake Baikal to do the same. Do you wanna have a look at my pictures?” asked the girl eagerly, shoving her Nikon D90 camera at his face.

Sighing, he took her D90 camera and began to flip through the pictures. He was impressed when he saw that she had taken breathtaking pictures of a river, the waters stretched out like a resplendent ribbon below but the highlight were the amazing freezes, taken of the black polecat.

After a while, Catherine reached out and smugly asked him,

“You have been looking at them for over half an hour. I take it that you like them?”

“They were quite... good” he mumbled in reply. But by then, Julian had retreated into his shell. She could not get any more replies from him till on the third day. Julian was initially chary of discussing his life with a perfect stranger but he realized that he owed her something in return for sharing her pictures with him.

“Like I told you, I am from London. I am the CIO of Worknet. com” was the niggardly introduction from him.

“What!” exclaimed Catherine, “You are the millionaire co-founder of one of the largest business portals in the world? Then what are you doing here in the second class compartment of a train headed out to nowhere? What about your job?”

“Once in a while, I disappear to places where none of my company drones can reach me easily. Places that will not permit me to immerse myself in my work. If that place had Wifi, I would be worrying about all the work that I am leaving behind even if I ditched my laptop and I could never leave my phone. I would have soon succumbed to the temptation of becoming a workaholic again. So I had to go to places where I am cut off from the rest of the world temporarily.”

“Is that all you want from this journey?” asked Catherine.

“In the meanwhile, I also want to travel to places with great landscapes. When I was younger, I used to tramp across the countryside, thinking of the new places that I have not seen. But now I have learnt that the world is small and I have already seen all the great places in the world through the Internet.”

Julian’s words portrayed a bleak picture and his gloom now weighed heavily on Catherine’s heart as the train continued to chug inexorably eastwards.

~*~

It happened to Julian on the evening of the fifth day of his journey on the Rossiya. The train had earlier been snaking its way past the mountain ranges on western side of the Lake Baikal. The last two carriages were detached from the train when it was on a great curve to the south but no other damage was done to it nor was anyone hurt.

“Come on, let’s have a look”, insisted Catherine, dragging Julian out of the stationary train. A sizeable crowd had gathered on the tracks to look at the detached carriages.

The driver addressed them all in Russian and in English saying,

“This is just a minor inconvenience. Our train engineers are temporarily attaching the detached carriages with the train but we can join them together only when we get to Baykalsk tonight. Passengers can wander around till we are able to resume our journey in an hour.”

Never one to sit idle, Catherine was prodding Julian to accompany her on her climb.

“Come on. We’ll climb that slope and see what the vale on the other side looks like.”

“I already know what is there on the other side. I had a look at them just now on my phone. I had the satellite images of our whole journey and their vicinity downloaded into my phone earlier for contingency purposes. There is nothing there but a clump of trees” replied Julian but he accompanied her on her ascent.

The veteran climber Julian was the first to reach the crest. As he looked down into the vale, the voice in his throat was stolen by the splendour of the scene below him. Its beauty had taken over his soul, while life as he knew it left him.

The vale below them indeed had small clumps of trees like Julian had said. But they were covered in fresh frost and their mantle of icicles glinted fiercely in the light of the setting sun, dazzling their eyes. Opposite to them, the sun hung just over the mountains like a huge red orb, a blazing ruby in the rough. The frosts on the ground had begun to melt, forming a shimmering new lake that had begun to engulf most of the vale, its tranquil waters ablaze with the mirroring glory of the sun, sky and land.
When Catherine clambered up to the top, she too fell under the same enchantment as Julian. It was the most wonderful scene that she had ever seen in all her peregrinations. Many years after this incident, the memory of that scene would continue to haunt her. When she woke up from her reverie, she was startled to see that the sun had almost set and that the train below was about to leave. Julian had still not recovered and was still gazing at the vale.

“Julian, the train is about to leave. We have to leave now” urged Catherine to no avail. She had to drag Julian the rest of the way down into the train. Weary, she dropped to the berth opposite to Julian and fell asleep.

She woke up in the early minutes of the sixth day to see Julian sitting on his bed, contemplating deeply. She did not know what to say to him. He finally broke the silence,

“We have almost reached Baykalsk but we have to stay there for a day. They will attach the detached carriages properly there and it will be nightfall by the time we depart.”

“So it would be best if I spend my day on the lake and continue on the same train to Vladivostok after I finish taking my photos” replied Catherine happily though she was still troubled after the previous day on the crest.

When they came to Baykalsk, they disembarked together. When they arrived on the southern shores of the great lake, they were duly impressed by the largest, deepest and oldest lake in the world. She took amazing photos of the lake on the great heights and marvelous images of eagles skimming on the water. Under Julian’s aegis, nothing untoward happened to them till they reached the train and resumed their journey.

The sixth and seventh nights on the train passed swiftly as it raced towards its final destination to recover lost time. When the train finally came to a screeching halt at the city of Vladivostok by the Pacific Ocean, a golden dawn came up to greet them. As the rest of the passengers streamed out of the train, Julian and Catherine had their last conversation together.

“That day, when we were standing together on the crest of the slope. It was then that I realized something. I had thought, just because I had downloaded a map of the place, it would remain like that for all eternity. I had failed to understand that with time, all things change. I had somehow come to believe that seeing a few digital pixels of a place is the equivalent of experiencing its wonders. It is not so simple.”

He paused for a while, wanting to say many things at the same time. He continued,

“I had said that the world is becoming small. I was wrong. The world is becoming larger. Everyday, there are a thousand new things to be experienced. From now on, I will strive to experience more of the world but now I think it is time we left this train.”

They said their farewells to each other as they got down the train. Julian looked at her for one last time before he suddenly turned and walked away from her life forever. Seeing the serenity on Julian’s face from afar, Catherine had her own revelation.

All her life, she had been restless. She only wanted the extraordinary or the picturesque. She was not content with ordinary things, since she was never patient enough to understand their inner beauty. Indeed, she had never even thought to take photos of people and their creations. She suddenly looked around the station and she saw that the people bustling around it were marvels in their own way. From now on, she resolved to capture the beauty intrinsic in people and their works.

Without thought, her hands moved. She fixed her camera sights on Julian’s receding face and clicked. As she was leaving Vladivostok station, she looked at the image that she had just snapped. It showed Julian’s face with a look of peace mixed with happiness, his head halved in the dawn.

**P. M. Krishnan,**
**IV B.E. (CSE)**

**LOVE WITH A SOLDIER**

Let me tell you how it feels,
On the ground, when a soldier kneels;
With a ring in a hand and a flower in another;
And a feel in his heart, that you are his full-time lover.
Though you feel, he is everything,
For him, his country is everything.
The last smile he gives when he’s bidding good bye,
Will break your heart like the stars in the sky.
The phone calls he makes and tells you he loves you
in joy and sorrow,
Are never fake as he doesn’t know whether he can
tell you this tomorrow.
The feeling when a phone call comes from his friends,
Will leave you stunned and shocked till the ring ends.
With his words ringing sounds,
You know deep down in your heart,
Your love is fighting a war of life or death.

He is a soldier destined to serve,
But to love him need more than just guts in the nerve.
The death of his team members don’t deter his goals,
But, make your world a big black hole.
He might not remember your birthday,
But never forgets to write you a letter in his heart that
he loves you every single day.

Loving a soldier is not for a weak heart;
You must be ready to welcome him in person or in a box.

**LOVE A SOLDIER .....
Know how it feels to love every second of your life.
I never would have tears on my face,
Because, I know that it’ll weaken your heart when
you are on your chase.
Though I know that, for years we are going to be apart,
I would be waiting for you in our doorway, with a
smile on the face and a lot of pride in the heart.

Adieu, my darling;
Adieu;
Come back with victory on your wall,
Or, really --- really, not at all……..

-Words of love from the heart of a soldier’s love.

Keerthika Damodharan
I B.E. (EEE)
Death, an ambiguous word that is phrased equivocally by different people. Some say it as the darkest phase of life which everyone dreads. Some call it the freedom, from the agony and despair in life. For me, death was my future.

“Ishaan, be strong. We are all here to support you through this...” my doctor’s words kept ringing in my head. Support? That’s not what I need. What I need is a life. A perfect, normal life of a fifteen year old. I want to live. I don’t want to die. Tears gushed down progressing in severity like a cascade. Mom held me close. She couldn’t say anything nor change what was going to happen. Death is sooner going to be my best friend and my only companion. Yes, I’ve been predicted with the Huntington’s disease. And I have 10 more months in this world to cry and lament about it.

I reached home but I was scared to get in. I was even more scared of facing my life than facing my death. I felt a cold stoke through my veins and a big lump in my throat. I couldn’t breathe. I wanted to get out of there, to a place far far away where I could enjoy my solitude. I ran. I didn’t know where I was going but I just ran until the lump in my throat dissolved. I stopped near a park. Hot blood was streaming through my body. I felt an excruciating pain but I endured it. I sat on a bench. I was panting heavily and I could hear my heart do a drumbeat in rhythm. Music, has always been my passion. I thought about the guitar I got recently. I felt like yelling out loud asking “WHY ME?”. I hid my face behind my hands and started sobbing. I cried till my eyes lost its moisture. I felt someone nudging my sleeve. Turning around, I saw Ishita sitting next to me.

“What are you doing here, Ish? Go home” I said in a brotherly tone. Smriti’s mother usually takes us here to play”, Ishita said. “Ishaan bhaiya why are you crying? Did you score less in your exam?” she added, innocence at the tip of her tongue playing with every word of hers. Ishita is my little sister who is 6 years old. I presumed she didn’t understand what Huntington’s disease meant. I couldn’t blame her, usually takes a bit of a research to know about it.

Huntington’s disease is a rare deadly genetic disorder that affects muscle coordination and leads to psychiatric troubles but does not affect the emotions of the patient. I didn’t want to explain about my illness to her. Sometimes, it is better to let go of certain details. So I just said “No, I fought with mom.” She had an intense brainstorming, and finally said “Go say sorry”. I laughed at her innocence. She always knew the right thing to say. It’s me who complicated the simple stuff. So what if I die? Everyone dies. Maybe I am lucky in a way to know when I am going to die. I decided, ‘I am going to LIVE MY LIFE in these 10 months’.

Going back home, I found mom crying in her room. I went to her and told that I still have got 10 more months and she cannot cry all along. She has to be strong in order to support me. “I don’t want anyone to know about it. I just want to go to school and lead a normal life.” I added, and mom agreed and hugged me.

School was normal for a week or so. I was not the brightest of my class but not the dumbest either. I was into sports and was always with a gang and hated being left alone. In a week, I started learning the distressfulness of my illness. I couldn’t control or resist certain movement of my arms and legs. I had to quit football. I ended up falling down most of the time while walking. I slowly started becoming the laughing stock of my school. Apparently, my friends were too cool for me. Everyone started avoiding me. Death wasn’t my only companion. I was starting to be accompanied by loneliness as well. Sometimes I felt like screaming at myself to stop my involuntary muscle movements. I am going to die. Why couldn’t have it been more pleasant? Why do I have to give up on my self-esteem? All I asked for was for me to have fun and live my life in these 10 months. Was that too much to ask for? I questioned God.

One day my best friends started taunting me along with the others. I had no one fighting for me. I was embarrassed. I went back home and threw a tantrum. I told that I wasn’t prepared to go to school anymore. I wanted to spend my entire life, which was nothing but 6 more months, bounded to my bedroom. But my dad dissented my ideas. He wanted me to go face life and not live like a coward. I was maddened by his disapproval. I was blinded by my fury that I went to the extent of saying “If you don’t love me then just do me a favor and kill me. 6 months, 1 day what big difference does it make anyways?” I ran upstairs to my room. I hated my dad for making me hate him. Death seemed like a better option to me at this point of time.

That night, Ishita came to me and said “bhaiyya, even I hate school. Can I also quit?” I said “No Ish, it doesn’t work like that. I am sick. I can’t go to school anymore.” Ishita replied, “Even I am sick” and faked a cough. I knew I had no chance to convince her. So I ended up going to school anyway. I turned a deaf ear to everyone at school. I started plunging myself into solitary. I listened to my favorite songs. I tried playing them using my guitar. Finally, I made up my mind to teach Ishita how to play the guitar. Ishita was the best part of my life. My bond with her grew stronger by the day. I used to think that I was going to miss her the most when I was gone. The little things that we did together added meaning to my life.

I neared the last three months. I was becoming more and more vulnerable each day. I had troubles in swallowing, eating and speaking. I developed a stuttering disorder. This was the most difficult period for me. I eventually had to quit schooling telling my sister that I got an offer to study abroad in three months. I didn’t have to discommodate myself to speak with Ishita. She could predict me easily. Mom sometimes lost her control over her emotions and ended up sobbing right in front of me at my stage of affairs. I had to console her most of the time. I was starting to feel like an encumbrance to everyone. I only hoped that the three months got over in a flash with no further issues.

One day, I was following through my photo albums. I relished every single memory. I had so much fun back
then. That was the time when I used to believe that I was going to live forever. I was recollecting the future plans I made back then. I used to put on a cape and run around the house singing “captain planet”. The very memory of it made me laugh. I stood in front of the mirror and put on a cape. But I could neither run nor sing anymore with ease. I was not captain planet anymore. I was more of a crippled planet. When I was about to remove my cape, Ishita walked in. She was shocked at the sight of me wearing a cape. She ran towards me and begged me to do it for her as well. I tied a cape for her. She started moving slowly and deliberately in a feminine manner and asked me to play along. She then went and put on her tiara. Only then I understood that she was a princess and I was supposed to be a prince. I took her hand and made her spin. She laughed. I felt special. I had no idea how to repay her for her making me feel happy at her very sight!

It was my final days. I was bed ridden. I couldn’t really do anything. Ishita used to sing me songs using my guitar. She wasn’t that good at it, but we still had fun. My mom was pretty strong by now and so was I. I was ready to face it. Looking back, I had the best fifteen years of my life. There were no regrets nor remorse. Every single moment held some value and I treasured all of them.

My friends came to visit me. They were all sorry for being mean. I could see they really were. I gave them all a hug. That was the most I could do.

I opened my eyes, turned towards my left, my parents were sobbing. My dad had always been my superhero. Never had I seen him cry over anything. Towards my right, there was my sister, sitting on my bed holding my hand. I knew it was time for me to be gone. I still doubt if Ishita understood the real meaning of death. She wasn’t crying. She kept calm. I constantly kept asking myself “why me?” throughout this journey. But now looking at Ishita’s face, I am actually contended that it is me. My agonies, excruciations and distresses ends here. But the people around me are going to carry it forever. My memories are going to be laden in their minds clouding their eyeshot to everlasting happiness.

The very notion of me standing in their place looking at the one I love about to die gives me shudders. Though my life was short, it was complete. And it will never be as complete as mine for any of them. Here I am, in my deathbed, expecting my decease any second, feeling commiserate for the one’s who live. I smiled at the irony of my life and looked at Ishita. She smiled back.

Visali.M
I B.E.(BME)

WAR AND PEACE

A reddish orange glow skimmed over the surface,
A tinge of green between interspaced.
Smooth frothy waves flew off the surface like a disturbed jelly.
It was signs of an evening sea.
A shade of darkness followed the setting sun.
And subduing to its heaviness,
the sun took its daily dip in the sea.
The sailor watched life going about in circles.
End of a phase, start of another.
The winged fliers, of colors many
That frequent the huge canvas above
Hadn’t visited the spectating sailor today
He wondered where they went
The sea in front was at peace.
The lights behind him were loud.
Killing all peace of the art before him.
The Great Warship steered through the silent night.
Awaiting an impending war.
A lot of activity on deck,
white clothed, star marked sailors ran around, carrying a sense of excitement.
The usual star blanketed sky
Was stabbed by colors of green, red and blue
And of smoke screens toxic.
The sea looked calm and pale,
Silently praying that the war
on its womb would pass,
with not much death of its
Scaled and finned inhabitants.
There was soft and distant muffling of sounds
beneath the green carpet muffled by
the loud bombs behind the sailor.
He reckoned it was the fishes
now weeping. Yearning the loss
Of their loved ones.
And then he realised!
How the sea was always
vsalty and teary.
Sky, Sea or Land!
A warzone choose.
Man loves himself so much,
that all these bounties are
worth less than his pride.
Quicker than a wink of an eye,
can he give away all these.
Live now and regret later,
Alas, the pain is passed on, not experienced.

Mohamed Refai Mohamed Irfan
IV B.E.(BME)
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