

---

## FICTOPIA

Aashutosh Sharma  
Akshit Marwaha  
Avneet Kaur  
Ayushman Ganguly  
Harmanjot Singh  
Harsh Arora  
Harsh Khanna  
Harshun Bhardwaj  
Inayat Kaur  
Kanwalpreet Dhillon  
Manpreet Kaur  
Mehnaaz Maan  
Nishant  
Rahool Saran  
Taj Sharma  
Samiksha Madhan Pillai  
Sanika  
Saumyaa Gelani  
Saumya Katoch  
Shreshtha Singh  
Sya Aggarwal

## Fraser CRÔNICA



# Fraser CRÔNICA

## FICTOPIA

Edition Two



# FOREWORD

Dear Readers

Welcome to a very captivating second edition of Fraser Valley India's student-run magazine. In this magazine, we will embark on a journey beyond the confines of everyday existence. Through the pages that follow, we invite you to explore the different forms of escapism that offer respite from our mundane lives.

In this edition, you will encounter tales of adventure, dreams woven into reality, and fantasies that transport us to realms beyond our wildest imaginations. Through literature, art, music, and more, we embark on a journey of self-discovery and exploration, where the boundaries of reality blur and the possibilities become endless.

So, dear readers, as you turn the pages of this magazine, let your imagination take flight. Embrace the worlds within and beyond, for in the pursuit of escape lies the promise of infinite possibility.

Welcome to a journey of wonder, welcome to a celebration of escapism.

Enjoy the adventure.

Ravneet Sekhon  
Coordinator, Student Life & Industry Engagement  
Fraser Valley India

© 2024 Fraser Valley India  
all rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.  
Opinions expressed in this publication belong to their respective authors, and it may not be the opinions of Fraser Crônica or Fraser Valley India.  
Unattributed images sourced from Canva and Pexels.



# Editor's Note

Dear Readers

I am honored to welcome you to the second edition of our student magazine Fraser Crônica. Through our Fictopia edition, we encouraged our creative students and alumni to share their journeys of escaping into their own fictional world.

In life, we all yearn to escape the troubles of our past, present, and future, seeking refuge in a world where we can craft our own stories and embark on personal journeys. This edition delves into the theme of escaping to our own fictional utopias, highlighting the uniqueness of each individual's world. Every page of this magazine narrates a distinct story through various written and visual mediums, immersing the reader in the creative journey of our immensely talented contributors. We explored the theme through diverse visions, perspectives, and creative angles.

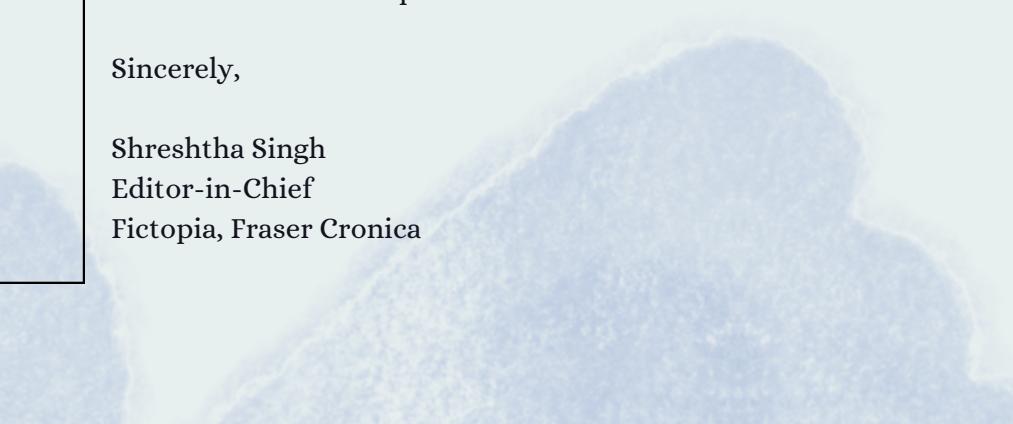
Throughout the production of this magazine, our dedicated team collaborated seamlessly. The social media and content team curated engaging content to encourage maximum contributor participation. Editors and designers diligently translated the contributors' visions onto the magazine's pages, respecting the authenticity of their creative expressions.

We trust that you will relish our magazine as much as we enjoyed producing it. We hope you appreciate and applaud the efforts of our immensely talented editorial team and contributors. Most importantly, let Fictopia be your contemplative and cherished personal escape—a respite in the midst of life's complexities.

Sincerely,



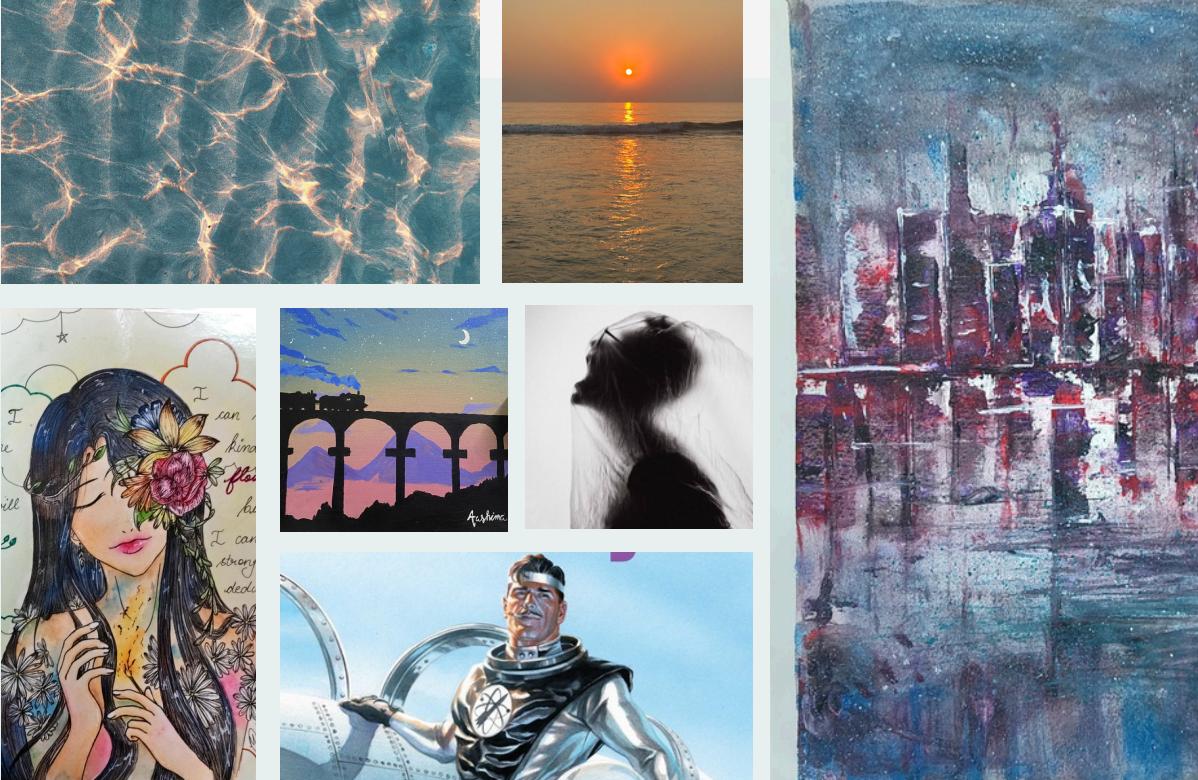
Shreshtha Singh  
Editor-in-Chief  
Fictopia, Fraser Crônica



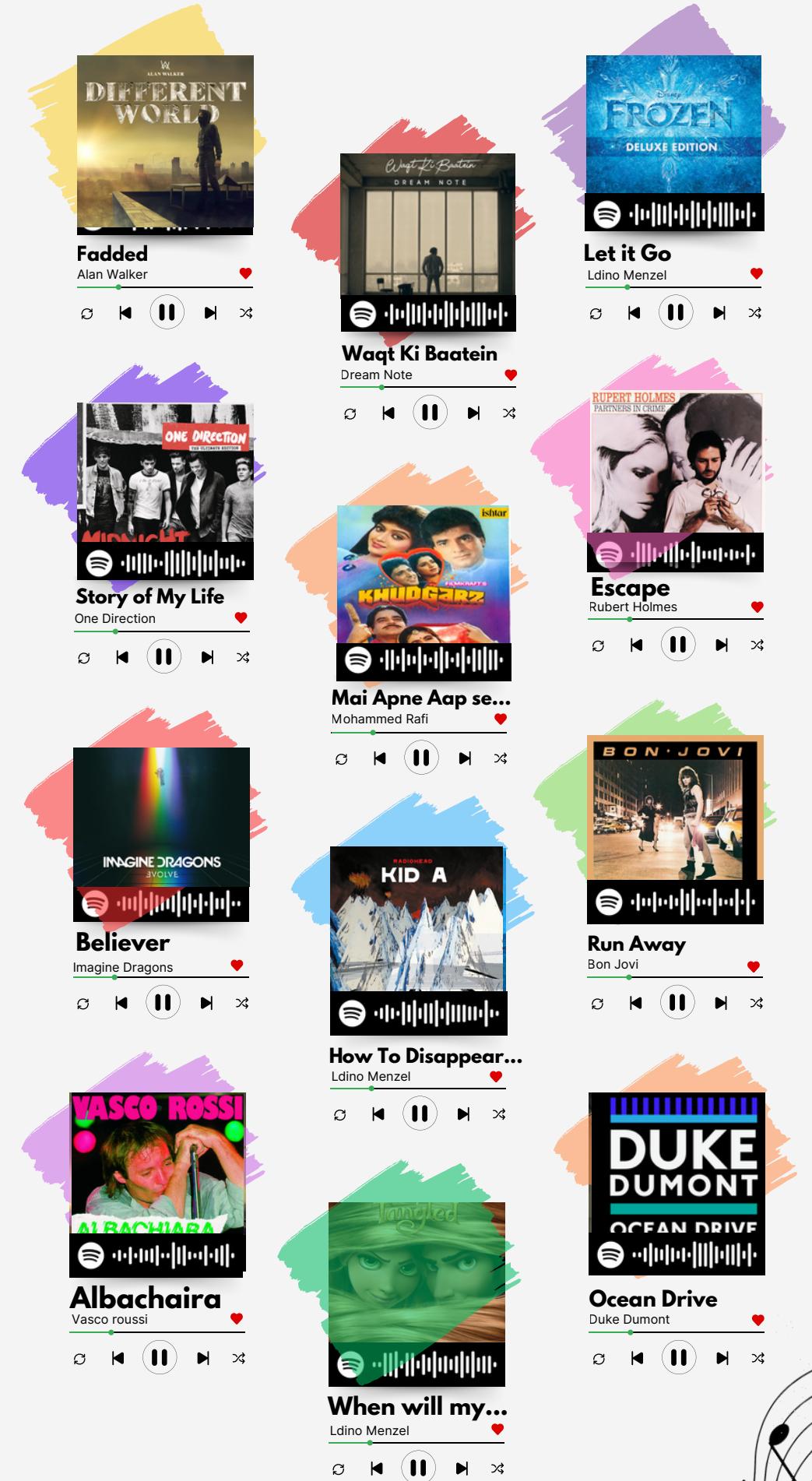
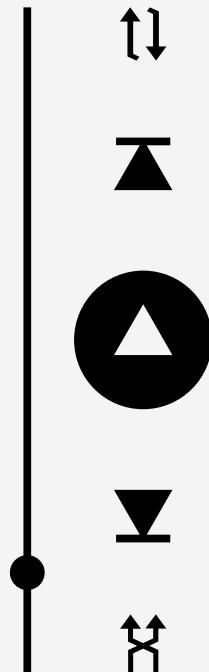
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A Midnight Utopia  
~Ayushman Ganguly
2. Artwork  
~Aashima Marwaha
3. Portals of Distraction:  
A Curated Escape  
Collection  
~Mehnaaz Maan
4. Artwork  
~Manpreet Kaur
5. What If?  
~Harmanjot Singh
6. 3:19 AM  
~Anonymous
7. Photograph  
~Parneet Kaur
8. Exploring Escapism  
through Comics  
~Samridhh Chaudhary
9. Photograph  
~Rudra Sharma
10. Puzzles Time

11. Blackout Poetry
12. Two Homes  
~Navneet Kaur
13. Artwork  
~Manpreet Kaur
14. Virtual Gateway  
~Vaibhav Datta
15. Artwork  
~Diya Madaan
16. Photograph  
~Kuvam
17. Beach: A Mysterious  
Escape  
~Mehnaaz Maan
18. Beyond the Canvas  
~Inayat Kaur
19. Do you think our mind  
carries more pressure  
than physical body?  
~Tamish
20. Bleak Faces  
~Anonymous



# PLAYLIST





# A Midnight ★ Utopia

~ Ayushman Ganguly

The stars are aligned in the form that I'd imagine them to be  
It's 3 am, and I'm lost playing the protagonist in my own film  
The film that makes me feel an unfelt emotion  
Which pacifies the ray of realistic thoughts.



This comfort zone feels sweet and safe  
As comfortable as the devil's rocking chair  
As chilly as a long winter night's cold air  
As satisfying as the sound of the 50s' record player  
Slowly delving into my comfort zone like layers.

Yet I plunge deep into the iceberg of my mind  
Uncharted territories, where emotions seep  
Clues to feelings like secrets they keep  
In this film of mine, where dreams and reality meet.

This comfort zone feels like a relief  
A perfect mechanism that erases the grief  
A disengagement from the corporality of cruelty  
A utopia where peace and love plant their seed  
And protect me from a world that internally bleeds.



Aashima

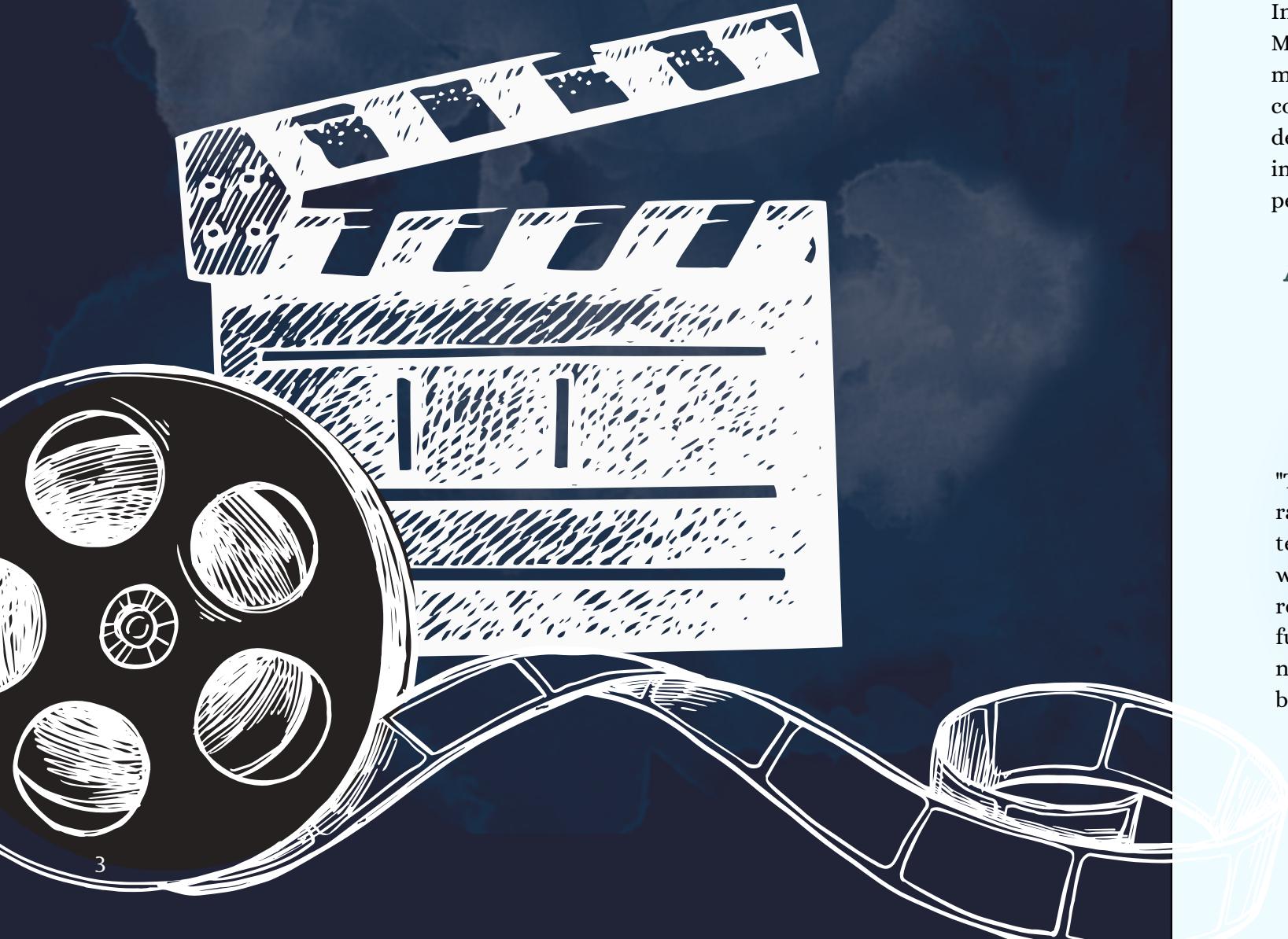
~ Aashima Marwaha

"The journey leads me to endless possibilities. From escaping the confines of reality to embarking on boundless adventures, each step forward opens new horizons and invites exploration."

# PORTALS OF DISTRACTION: A CURATED ESCAPE COLLECTION

~ Mehnaaz Maan

If immersing yourself in the captivating world of media, shows, and movies is your preferred escape from the chaos of reality, you're not alone. If that's your sanctuary, your safe haven, then consider this your curated list. We're here to enhance your journey and add to your escape.



## At Eternity's Gate (Film)

Examining the poignant life of Vincent van Gogh, the Academy Award-nominated biography centers on his entanglement with mental illness and intellectual curiosity. Through the lens of the film, we witness his coping mechanisms for internal strife, wherein he turns to art as a means of extricating himself from the grasp of reality.

Genre: Thriller/ TV

## Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Film)

In "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," Joel and Clementine erase their memories to avoid pain, exploring the consequences of escaping reality through deception. The film highlights the importance of facing life's challenges for personal growth.

Genre: Romance/Sci-fi

Available on: Amazon Prime Video

## The Peripheral (Film)

"The Peripheral" although got an IMDb rating of just 7.6/10, it explores themes of technology, virtual reality, and parallel worlds. Flynn Fisher uncovers a cross-reality conspiracy, intertwining futuristic tech, political intrigue, and a narrative blurring virtual and real boundary.

Genre: Sci-fi Thriller

## Night Sky (Series)

If sci-fi drama is your interest, then this is for you! Irene and Franklin, growing old in Farnsworth, find comfort in watching stars through a secret portal to the universe. The story mixes joy, excitement, and challenges, showing why an old woman sought an escape from her reality.

Genre: Sci-fi Drama

## Kho Gaye Hum Kahan (Film)

An Indian film that reflects the friendship of 2 boys and a girl and how they come together and figure out a life beyond the messed-up situations they have already created. The story unravels and justifies the role social media plays in our lives to make us escape the realm just to become lonelier, self-oriented and unaware of our actions. If you want to watch something light but meaningful that is for GenZ, then here is your pick!

Genre: Drama/Romance

Available on: Netflix

## I Got a Cheat Skill in Another World and Became Unrivaled in the Real World, too

Read it for an uplifting adventure! Yuuya, bullied and neglected, discovers a magical door in his late grandfather's house. Through it, he enters a world of treasures and powers, embarking on a thrilling journey. With newfound abilities, he aims to transform his life for the better.

Genre: Fantasy/Anime/Isekai

### **A Million Miles Away (Film)**

Inspired by Hernández's book, "Reaching for the Stars: The Inspiring Story of a Migrant Farmworker turned Astronaut," the film showcases his unwavering determination. The trailer reveals Hernández's decade-long struggle, with 12 attempts to enter the space program before realizing his dream in August 2009, when he joined the space shuttle Discovery. He grows from how he grows from a young boy working in farms, belonging to a migrated family all the struggle up to the pinnacle, and becoming a renowned astronaut.

**Genre: Drama**

### **Omniscient reader viewpoint (Book)**

Add it to your reading list for a unique twist! This Korean manhwa turns an overlooked literary piece into a captivating story. An office worker's love for literature takes a surreal turn when the fictional world comes to life, becoming a spectacle for the amusement of gods. Watch as he navigates survival in a once imaginary realm, transforming his ordinary existence into an extraordinary adventure.

**by Sing Shong**

### **Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine (Book)**

Eleanor Oliphant is an eccentric and socially awkward woman who constructs a carefully regimented life. As she develops an unexpected friendship, the novel explores themes of loneliness, healing, and the transformative nature of human connection, providing a nuanced escape from the complexities of reality.

**by Gail Honeyman**

### **The Perks of Being a Wallflower (Book)**

Read "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" for its authentic portrayal of the challenges of growing up. The story follows Charlie as he navigates abuse, mental health, and self-discovery. The novel is emotionally rich, capturing the highs and lows of adolescence, with Charlie's unique perspective expressed through letters. Praised for genuine characters and tackling sensitive topics, it's a modern YA classic often recommended for its relatability.

**by Stephen Chbosky**



**~ Manpreet Kaur**

"For me, drawing is an escape; every stroke and colour represents emotions that cannot be explained in words. The time I spend working on my art piece is like a momentary escape, temporarily relieving me from the anxiety and pressure I face"

# WHAT IF?

~ Harmanjot Singh

Out of 8 billion people on the planet, as humans, we encounter only a certain set of individuals throughout our entire lives. Nobody can know everybody, and the reason behind this phenomenon is beautifully depicted in the Bhagavad Gita, which suggests that everyone comes into our lives as a lesson. Every friend was once a stranger, and eventually, sometimes friends become strangers. Each individual we come across teaches us a lesson in our lives

Similarly, a person who could be a friend to one could be a foe to another. Our individuality and uniqueness set us apart from everyone else; each one of us is the odd one in our way. Every person is born with some responsibilities and abilities that are perceived differently by different people, which shapes our 'reality'.

**“One’s reality might be other’s delusion”**

One's reality might be another's delusion, and what we perceive as reality may all just be an illusion. Every human being relies on and is bound by their knowledge and experience to live. This is what we call 'reality'. However, knowledge and experience are ambiguous, thus reality can become an illusion. People live their lives bound by what they accept as correct and true. That's how they define 'reality'. However, both knowledge and awareness are equivocal. One's reality might be another's illusion. We all live inside our fantasies. No matter how powerful one becomes, never try to shoulder everything alone. If one does, they will surely fail.

Hypothetically, considering the theory of the multiverse, each one of us has our own set of different realities across space and time. This was suggested in the Ramayana when Lord Ram once asked Hanuman to fetch his ring from Hell. When he traveled down there, he was encountered by the guardian at the gates who showed him a stack of rings piled up.

Hanuman Ji was told that one of these belonged to Lord Ram, and the very first ring that he picked up turned out to be the one. Hanuman Ji was thrilled, but the guardian asked him to look closely, and he realized that all of the rings were the same. When Hanuman Ji asked about this, the guardian told him that over the period, there existed a Lord Ram and a Hanuman. During each cycle of time, each Ram throws his ring down there and sends Hanuman Ji to fetch it. This time cycle proves that similar versions of us exist in time and space, proving the theory of the multiverse.



When we coexist with different versions of ourselves, we are always growing as a part of the process. We are constantly evolving, and change is the only constant. Nothing is as constant as change. One should learn to be empathetic, to understand this, to believe and realize this about all of us. All of us are going through something throughout the day—things we do not talk about, things we burden ourselves with and keep to ourselves. We fight our battles silently and alone. So, we should all unite to stand by each other, cherish the bonds that we have formed for as long as they last, and make the best out of memories.

One's reality might be another's illusion. We all live inside our own fantasies". No matter how powerful one becomes, never try to shoulder everything alone. If one does, they will surely fail. During each cycle of time, each Ram throws his ring down there and sends Hanuman ji to fetch it. This time cycle proved that the similar versions of us exist in time and space, proving the theory of multiverse.



3:19AM

~ *Anonymous*

Mistakes that pile,

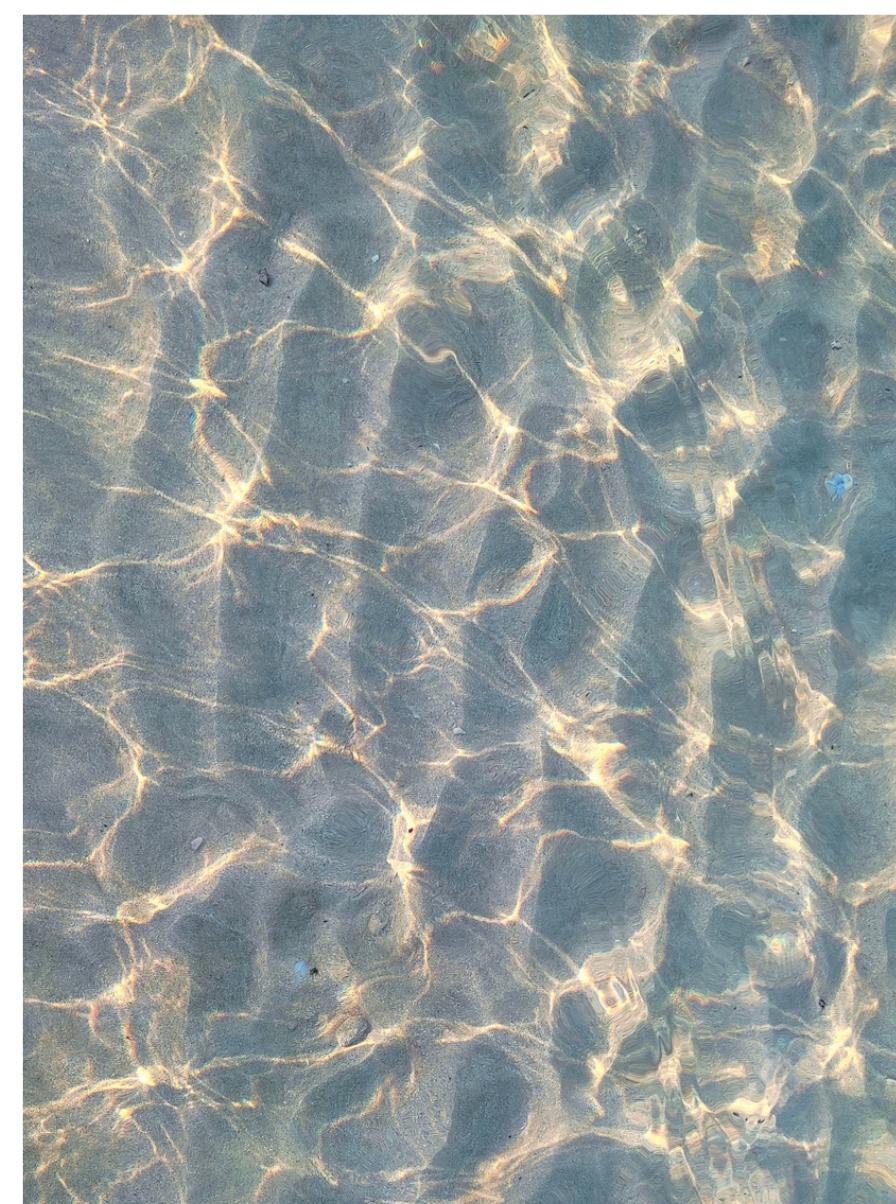
Bring me down mile by mile.

Sleep's embrace I long to find, Escape from this weary mind.

Every step feels like a mistake, And I wish I could just escape.

Into a peaceful slumber so deep,

Where pain and sorrow can't creep.



~ *Parneet Kaur*

"Through the lens, I lose myself in the soothing waves, leaving behind the demands of reality."

# EXPLORING ESCAPISM THROUGH

Many artistic mediums provide an escape for us during times of overwhelming stress. Just listening to music, playing video games, or watching a good movie can alter the impact of the nerve-racking daily tasks we face. One medium that has been overlooked by the masses, in comparison to others, is the medium of comics, despite its status as one of the oldest escapist mediums. It has helped alleviate stress during times like the world wars and has shown people an optimistic future for the world. Comics would be as effective now as they were back in the day. Through this article, you can also escape into different worlds through comics and let go of all your woes, at least for some time.



Science Fiction fans: this one is for you. The plot of Starlight is dedicated entirely to the importance of escapism, to the extent that it criticizes the mundanity of people's lives from its very first issue. It depicts our normal lives as lonely and desperate at first. Only later does it transport the main character to a world filled with all kinds of creatures and technologies. The most striking difference between the two worlds was that in the new world, everyone knew and respected the main character. It delves into the significance of recognition and respect for humanity. This optimistic expedition to different worlds is going to warm some hearts.



The way this comic provides escapism is the most unique in the medium. This book creates an atmosphere of silence. Most panels lack any dialogue and just show the main character walking around or silently working as a contract killer.

The book hooks one from the very beginning and makes the atmosphere stronger by adding tense moments filled with suspense that would intrigue the readers. Readers who enjoy slower stories would enjoy this tale of vengeance and its consequences.

# COMICS

~ Samriddh Chaudhary



This recommendation is for anyone who is already invested in the medium of comic books and if you wish to read it without any prior knowledge of the medium, I would at least recommend reading it after all the other books in this list. Planetary is the magnum opus of the writer Warren Ellis. It acts as a criticism and a tribute to the entire medium of comic books. Through three main characters, we experience each genre and era in comic book history. Planetary also works as a competent mystery and science fiction story that is about archaeologists who are working towards discovering the weird side of the world.



It is impossible to talk about comics without mentioning any superheroes in any way. Astro City is a story about heroes and villains and the never-ending pursuit of justice. After many years of the deconstruction of the genre by successful writers like Alan Moore, Kurt Busiek (the writer) reconstructs it single-handedly with his magnum opus, Astro City. Superhero fans are bound to enjoy this first recommendation. The comic holds on to the reader's attention through masterful usage of fourth wall breaks and manages to make it feel like we have been successfully transported to Astro City. By the end of this series, one can expect to have a giant smile on their face.

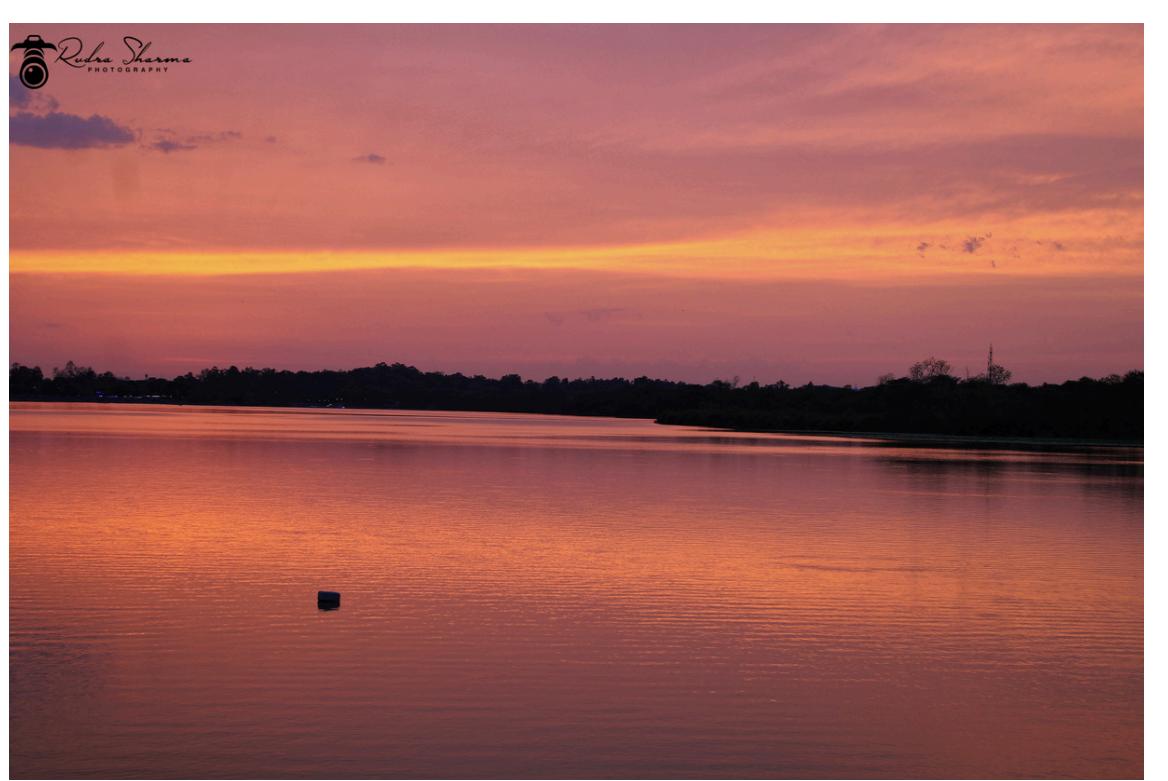


This recommendation is for anybody who enjoys thriller and noire stories. Criminal is the product of one of the longest and most fruitful collaborations in comic book history, the collaboration between writer Ed Brubaker and artist Sean Philips. Criminal is the second anthology series in the list and probably one of the best in any medium. Through Criminal the duo explores the complexity of morality and create a mood piece that aims to elicit the same emotional reaction as neo-noir thriller films do.



The way this comic provides escapism is the most unique in the medium. This book creates an atmosphere of silence. Most panels lack any dialogue and just show the main character walking around or silently working as a contract killer. The book hooks one from the very beginning and makes the atmosphere stronger by adding tense moments filled with suspense that would intrigue the readers. Readers who enjoy slower stories would enjoy this tale of vengeance and its consequences.

This recommendation is for anyone who is already invested in the medium of comic books and if you wish to read it without any prior knowledge of the medium, I would at least recommend reading it after all the other books in this list. *Planetary* is the magnum opus of the writer Warren Ellis. It acts as a criticism and a tribute to the entire medium of comic books. Through three main characters, we experience each genre and era in comic book history. *Planetary* also works as a competent mystery and science fiction story that is about archaeologists who are working towards discovering the weird side of the world.



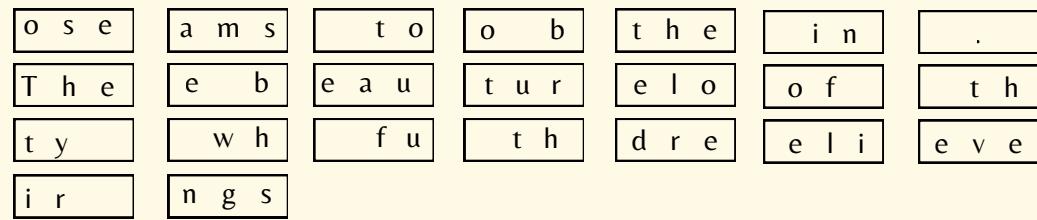
~ Rudra Sharma

"For me, this escape isn't a fantastical journey to another world, but a profound sense of peace unearthed by connecting with nature's embrace. Sukhna Lake, a jewel nestled within Chandigarh itself, becomes my sanctuary. This photograph captures the essence of that escape - a fiery sunset blazing across the lake's surface. It's a soul-stirring reminder of the vastness and beauty that surrounds us, a world where peace reigns supreme."

# PUZZLES TIME

## LETTER TILES - FAMOUS QUOTE

Re-arrange the boxes to complete the famous quote.



## WORD SEARCH

Search for the following words in the given grid.

Amusement	Hallucination
Daydreams	Magical
Dreamwalker	Nightmare
Fictopia	Castle
Imagine	Desires
Multiverse	Fantasia
Venus	Heroes
Art	Mirage
Delusion	Relive
Escapist	

O F N L E A T N G Q J H Y D M
K I A I R G M A H B S D N X M
E C Q T G L A A I S A T N A F
V T T D D H Q R U C X H V T D
I O S E O S T N I B E M U S E
L P Z D I E E M P M T A F I L
E I M H L V L O A Z T G E P U
R A T L E E Z T R R K I N A S
D A Y D R E A M S E E C I C I
G I D E S I R E S A H A G S O
S A J K T S E H W B C L A E N
R E K L A W M A E R D P M W G
M U L T I V E R S E V M I A J
H A L L U C I N A T I O N W E
T N E M E S U M A D Y B Y N R

## FALLEN PHRASES

Complete the puzzle by filling the letters into the column they fall under.



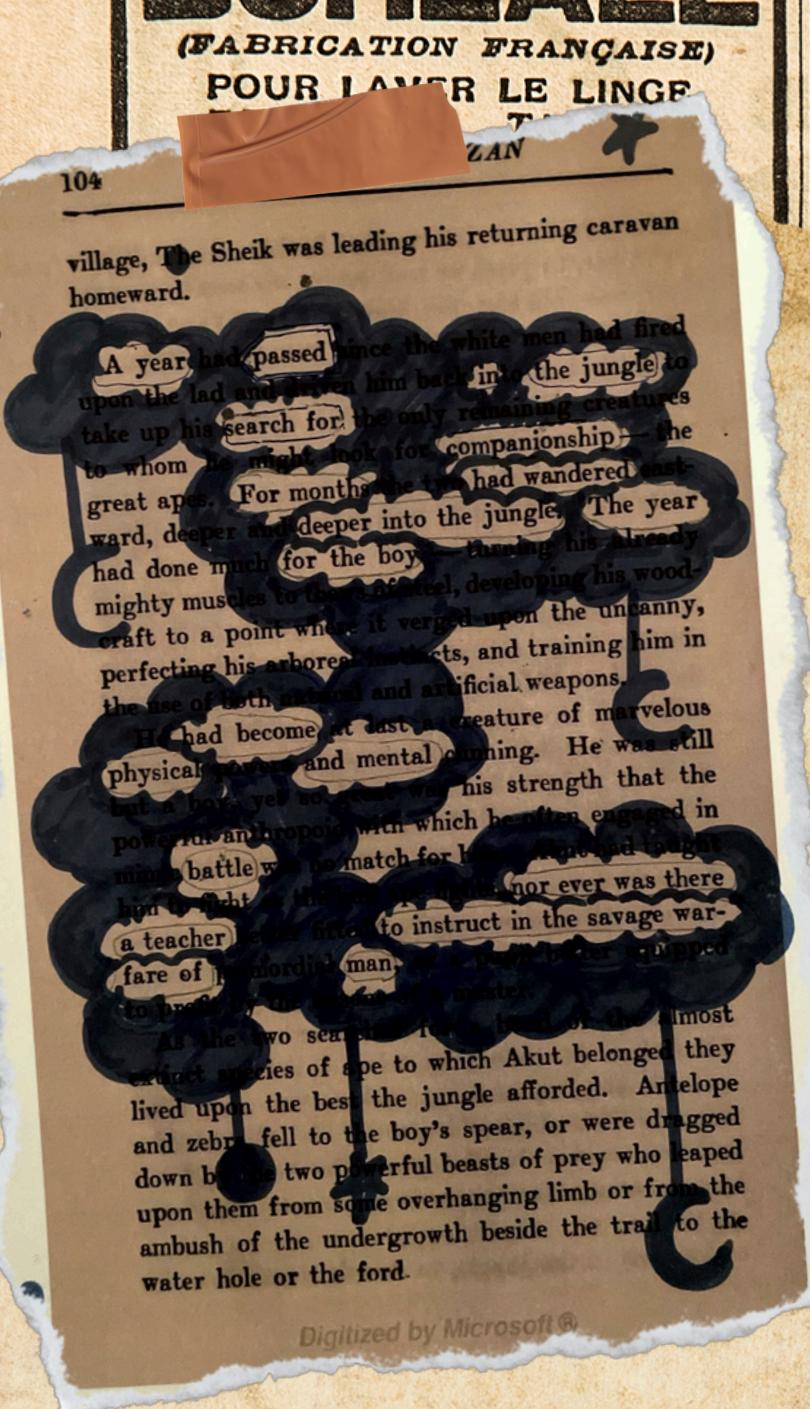
I	A				
H	H				
T T	T I H	C T E O R T Y	O H	T T	N P
O R G W E L A B F	P H D C I L N	T H I V P	S U S S Y		
T O O R T A E P H I N E W N N I R E A F E P E E N E A E					



Scan me for  
answers!

# BLACKOUT POETRY

To read blackout poetry, focus on the words left visible after blacking out or highlighting surrounding text, interpreting the remaining words to create a new poetic meaning.



# BLACKOUT POETRY

To read blackout poetry, focus on the words left visible after blacking out or highlighting surrounding text, interpreting the remaining words to create a new poetic meaning.

don't know if I will have the time to write anymore letters because I might be too busy trying to participate. so, if this does end up being the last letter I just wanted you to know that I was in a bad place before I started highschool and you helped me. Even if you didn't know what I was talking about or know someone who gone through it you made me not feel alone, because I know there are people who say all these things don't happen, and there are people who forget what it's like to be sixteen when they turn seventeen. I know these will all be stories some day and our pictures will become old photographs, and we will all become someone's mom and dad. But right now these moments aren't stories this is happening, I am here and I am looking at her, and she is so beautiful..... I am so lost. this one moment when you know you're not a sad story, you are always And you stand up and see the lights on the buildings and everything that makes you wonder when you were listening to that song, on that drive with the people you love most in this world. And in this moment, i swear, we are infinite.

MANPREET KAUR  
BAI

dépilatoires poudres et pâtes. L'Eau Pilophage s'racines et dissout les Poils les plus durs vous en convaincre, il suffit de demander du journal. Cet envoi sera fait discrète

A. GYPSIA 48. rue

290

## REBECCA

elt a pang at the absence of her mother, though she had known there was no possibility of seeing her; for poor Aurelia was kept at Sunnybrook by cares of children and farm, and lack of money either for the journey or for suitable dress. The Cobbs she saw too. No one, indeed, could fail to see uncle Jerry, for he shed tears more than once and in the intervals between the essays descended to his neighbors concerning the marvelous gifts of one of the graduating class whom he had known ever since she was a child; in fact, had driven her to Riverboro when she left her ad told mother that same night that y rung on the ladder o' fame that n't mount before she got through

hen, had come, and there were faces, but where was aunt Jane, made over especially for this occa, on this day of days, was her ? However, this thought, like d went in a flash, for the whole a series of magic lantern pic recrossing her field of vision. g, she recited Queen Mary's e in a dream, only brought to eting Mr. Aladdin's eyes as ne. Then at the end of the

One autumn evening the merchant's wife called the three girls to her and gave them each a task. One of her daughters she bade make a piece of lace, the other to knit a pair of hose, and to Wassilissa she gave a basket of flax to be spun. She bade each finish a certain amount. Then she put out all the fires in the house, leaving only a single candle lighted in the room, where the three girls worked, and she herself went to sleep.

They worked an hour, they worked two hours, they worked three hours, when one of the elder daughters took up the tongs to straighten the wick of the candle. She pretended to do this awkwardly (as her mother had bidden her) and put the candle out, as if by accident.

"What are we to do now?" asked her sister. "The fires are all out, there is no other light in all the house, and our tasks are not done."

"We must go and fetch fire," said the first. "The only house near is a hut in the forest, where

Manpreet Kaur  
BAI

# Two Homes

~ Navneet Kaur

In the heart of FVI, where dreams awaken,  
A vibrant campus, reality's haven.  
From distant homes, we boldly depart,  
Embarking on journeys, dreams at heart.

Homesickness whispers, yet no backward glance,  
Balancing two homes, a challenging dance,  
To love both, cherish both, and belong to both,  
Tough it may be, but just grant each an equal chance.

In the learning halls, some friendships bloom,  
A second family, a shared room.  
Amidst these paths, some find even more,  
Relationships that last, deep at the core.

The student life, proving its title right!  
Adding brightness, creating a vibrant school LIFE,  
From Diwali to Halloween, a celebration grand,  
From every event, memories we band.

The student lounge, a therapy, beyond four walls,  
Foosball and pool, where nostalgia calls.  
Faculty, mentors guiding our way,  
Through escapades from reality, where dreams sway.

So, to those with dreams in their eyes,  
Know you're building wings, preparing to rise.  
Find a home within, leave reality behind,  
And let your fantasies dance in your mind.

In the tough, the lonely, and the great,  
Believe in yourself, navigate your fate.  
From India to Canada, a big journey awaits,  
Enjoy the ride and stay close to your mates.

Your dreams will manifest, that much is true,  
Craft a special story, just like YOU!

What's  
Your  
Story?



~ Manpreet Kaur

Winner, IWD Poster Making Competition

Women have long sought solace and empowerment through art, stories, and theatre, transcending the struggles of reality. This artwork reflects an artist's escape into their craft, celebrating empowered women.

# Virtual

**"I think escapism is really important"**  
quoted Jordan Brewster

Amid our daily stressful life and schedule, we could use a little break. As the days go by, life gets crazier, and the need for solace increases. While we, as students, also known as today's sharp minds, get busy in our daily know-how! It's great to keep ourselves from chaos.

**Synda Barry quoted:**

"We don't create a fantasy world to escape reality, We create it to be able to stay."

In this world, no one needs to be reminded that life is full of challenges, heartbreaks, mental health difficulties, and challenging emotional experiences. In such a phase of life, escapism provides a haven from the trials and tribulations of the real world. It allows individuals to temporarily detach from their problems and worries, offering a much-needed respite.

In some other dimension, perhaps grass grows greener than here. How tempting it must be to escape to such a place, leaving behind the stress and anxieties of our current reality? We do this all the time in contemporary society, through escapism. Escapism is the attempt to ignore unpleasant realities. In realms of language, philosophy, and psyche, lies the inclination to flee reality's grasp for solace.

Just a few days back, while browsing through the news stories, I came across some interesting facts about people and how they manage to take a break from their busy lives.

Economic Times.com

8 Oct. 2023 ;  
Bliss of Everyday Life  
Driving on Weekends

In today's technology-dominated era, the joy of driving on the open road has taken on a new meaning. It offers an escape from daily routines and allows for unbridled exploration. Weekend road trips provide a break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, allowing us to reconnect with nature and experience true freedom

I read further and understood that:

The open road represents an escape from the daily grind, a retreat into the freedom of unbridled exploration, and a celebration of human ingenuity. It is also about getting behind the wheel, and not being driven about for a change. One gets a chance to breathe fresh air, soak in unimpeded nature, and reacquaint yourself with true freedom. Well, escapism is not a modern-age

# Gateway

~ Vaibhav Datta

phenomenon in any way, as the desire to escape may be a response to a stimulus, danger, or adversity but it could also be a calculative response to emotional survival.

**Here's another news story of interest as I, at times, do the same, have myself plugged with earphones**

5 Sept. 2023

**Music on earphones**

In our hyper-connected world, finding solace from incessant noise has become a precious commodity. One of the most wonderful-and effective-escapes is donning a pair of earphones and shielding oneself from music. In other words, cutting oneself off temporarily from the world outside.

Music carries emotions, thoughts, and imaginings, building a barrier between oneself and the world. Earphones provide a personal soundtrack, shielding us like armor. Escapism, then, shields from discomfort.

Books, video games, or other mundane activities can allow us to detach from reality and push us away from disruptive beliefs. Escapists can momentarily forget people and situations, easing guilt, anxiety, and helplessness through various avenues of escape.

A friend recently told me that he got through five levels of 'Candy Crush' in just a few hours, despite pending work. He found solace and wisdom in indulging in candy rather than responsibilities. Others prefer watching re-runs the night before an important examination, or meeting. Some plan fanciful holidays in the face of adversity. In the first week of November, many tourists flocked to Shimla, Nainital, and other hill stations to get respite from the toxic air pollution in the city. Isn't this escapism? These anecdotes are not unheard of, for offer a great escape - habitual distraction offering solace away from the 'real world.'

My brother has been reading a lot and I would agree that Reading is the best form of Escapism. Psychologist Sigmund Freud opined that a vial of escapism is a necessary element in life. Being in a world surrounded by devices that spurt notifications every second it's hard to look away, at times we need a break from the screen. Reading offers a form of escape, encourages imagination, and is packed with health benefits. It fosters emotional expression, and focus, and reduces stress levels.

I became a passionate reader when I was in 8th standard with Harry Potter – those books changed my life and I could feel myself attached to the characters now, that I have grown up. Some people escape by engaging in alternative activities such as sleeping, playing outdoors, immersing themselves in work, recreation, touring, sightseeing, chilling out with friends, listening to music,

and practising their hobbies. Yet, there is a darker side of the reality that some immerse themselves in addiction like emotional eating (bingeing) smoking, alcohol, drugs, gambling, running away from home (indigent), etc. Escapism becomes harmful when it turns into avoidance, leading to engagement in unhealthy activities, or even excessive indulgence in healthy ones. For example, shopping isn't inherently bad, but excessive indulgence can turn it negative.

Life is becoming increasingly challenging. Technology has enabled lifestyles where we are always on call. Stress is rising and so are depression and anxiety. As a result, there is a greater need for people to find ways to maintain a balance between personal and professional lives, and mental and emotional stability. Therefore, finding acceptable forms of escapism has become more vital than ever. There are numerous ways to transport ourselves from the stress-filled routine of home, school, college, workplace, or the daily grind. To combat such drastic situations, there are forms that we can engage ourselves in; like sports and yoga, and accept mental and physical challenges: Gym, reading, watching movies, exploring TV, camping, hiking, cycling with friends, making a retro video game console, swimming, crafting, cooking (learning as it's an intimidating art).

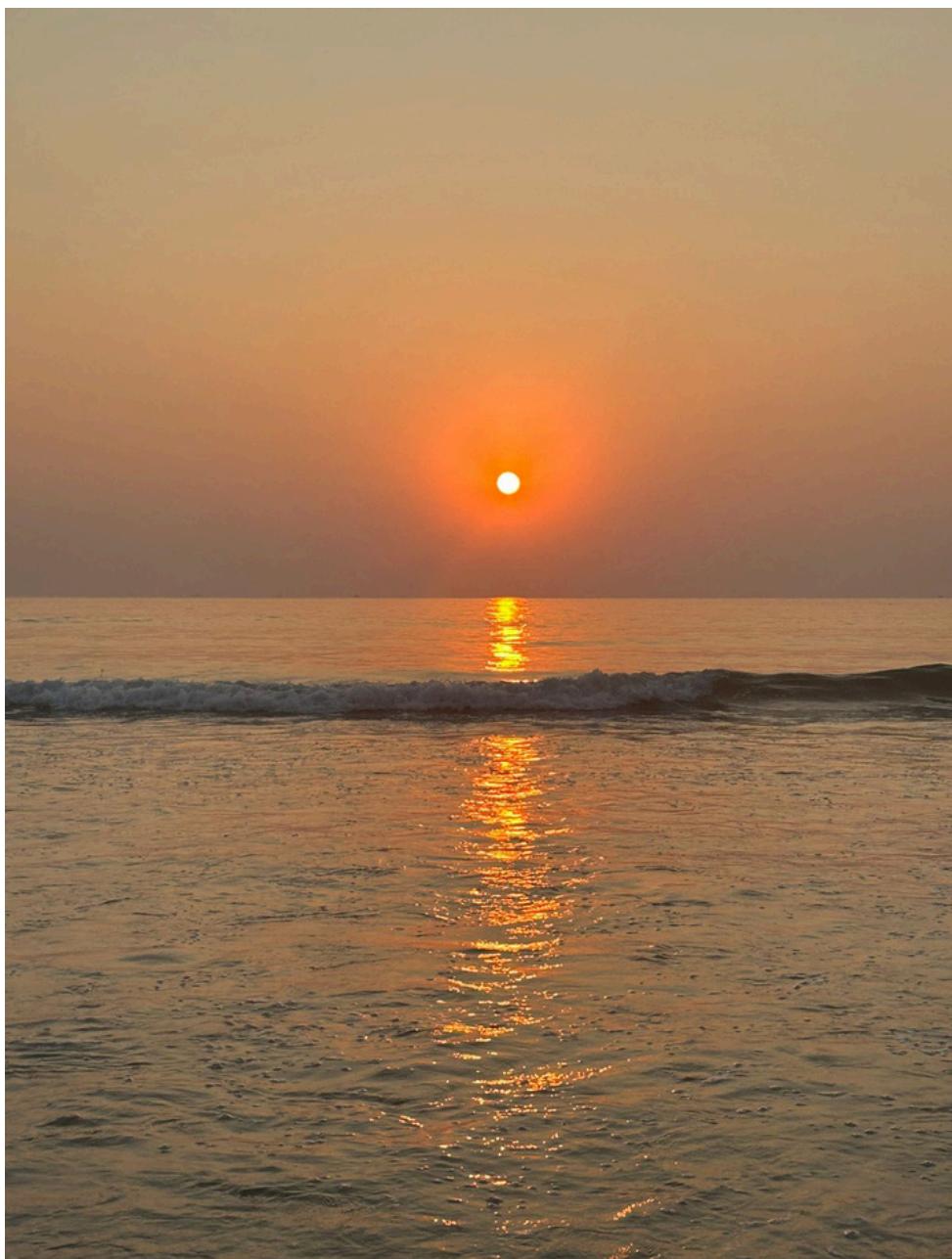
Some other activities that prove to be effective include taking a vacation, writing, and painting. The best is to meditate and be grateful for everything you have. If escapism serves to provide us a break from our work lives, or the world, it can be taken to the extreme. Moderation is key; escapism is no exception. Life is meant to be lived fully: We should experience a range of emotions, not because it's the easiest and most comfortable thing to do, but because it's deeply fulfilling and ultimately joyful.



~ *Diya Madaan*

*Runner up, IWD Poster Making Competition*

The struggle of consistently proving yourself and fighting to belong and be appreciated is felt by women all across. This artwork by Diya shows the unified effort of women all across to escape their struggles and harsh realities of life.



~ Kuvam

"A photo that captures the tranquil expanse of not just the beach but my dreams. Through my art of capturing by lens ,I found solace in capturing moments of beauty a relief from reality."

## BEACH: A MYSTERIOUS ESCAPE

~ Mehnaaz Maan

Ever observed a beach, it's the same as life,  
The itchy hot sand is a struggle,  
The waves are chilly endless wishes.  
Wind is a souvenir of infinite thoughts,  
Heavy flows of water,  
Which can help touch bliss,  
Or flow you all the way along unseen, unheard.  
Perpetually mysterious about the unknown- The future.

You may choose to fret about the sand in the slippers,  
Or care to notice the beauty of the destination,  
A beach isn't a one-time affair, it's a rendezvous with our imperfections,  
Yet within its heat lies the essence of life.

The beach tells you to be mysterious,  
Akin to the people who are scared to be vulnerable, to admit or confess what made them so polluted,  
Mostly, people exit in the search of perfection.  
But yes, some will return to dive deep beneath the soul's sheath of water and discover it to the foundation.  
Imperfections are revealed,  
Yet the beauty lies in the path we choose,  
The beach never waits,  
It continues to be mysterious until.

The shore is constantly telling us the world is an illusion,  
Where everything can be erased or rebuilt by the creator,  
And still, we want to leave our imprints on the sand thinking this one will stay intact,  
The beach washes it all away,  
Telling me nothing is forever,  
Yet, the beach continues to be mysterious until always.



# BEYOND THE CANVAS

~ Inayat Kaur

Andrew wakes up and takes a nice, hot shower. He puts on a fresh set of clothes, picks up two apples, and starts packing his supplies for the day. The clock strikes nine and he leaves his one-room apartment, which he can barely afford. After a five-minute commute, he reaches his favourite spot in the entire city. He opens his folding His eyes then linger towards his hand, which embraces the wrist of what seems to be a small child. The child is not visible in the painting. He then looks at a shadow that he had painted. The shadow of a woman with beautiful, long hair. Why did he not paint their faces, he wonders. He picks himself up from the chair, packs his stuff, and leaves for home.

chair and sets it at its usual spot on the pavement. He then places his white canvas in front of the chair, right next to his painting supplies. He takes out his paintings and places them alongside the wall behind him, hoping that they catch the eye of a passing pedestrian. The next day, he feels different. He sits at his usual spot, all day long, without touching his paintbrush. As he is lost in his chain of terrifying thoughts, he hears a name. His eyes look up from the ground and land upon the figure of a tall man. "Stefano!", The man shouts again. Andrew feels his body falling backward, and his

He then sits on his chair, smiling at the vision becomes black. Andrew finds himself in his painting. He sees trees that have now turned yellow. He likes the woman, standing, with blood dripping down trees. He likes the fact that they always keep her face. She looks at him with wide eyes, before changing. That day, he decided to paint falling flat to the ground. Andrew freezes at the trees.

After selling two paintings, he decides to call it a day. However, he is stopped by an intense urge to draw himself, right there, on the canvas standing in front of him. His hands start moving before his mind can register their actions. His hands messily draw the portrait of a man, a man who resembles Andrew, yet looks nothing like him. Andrew looks at the picture. He looks at the well-ironed shirt, the sleek gelled-back hairdo, and the distant look of longing in his sunken eyes. He does not recognize those eyes. Andrew has warm eyes. This man's eyes are the coldest he has ever seen.

sight, a sharp pain piercing through his heart. It is then that he notices the tall man who holds his hand in his tight grip. Andrew notices as the man keeps the gun on the table beside him. "Stefano, I'm sorry...", the man says with a trembling voice. "You killed her, Dad." Andrew loses control over his words. "You killed Mom!" Andrew screams as he frees himself from his dad's hold and runs out of the house. He hears another gunshot and snaps his head back towards the house, seeing his father falling to the ground, his face as bloody as his mother's.

Andrew runs and runs and runs till his mind transports him to a place far away from home, where he sees another man towering over him. Andrew is much older here than he was in the painting. "Be quiet boy or else!" The man screams as he forces himself onto Andrew's frail figure. "Stop! Please stop! Please!" Andrew cries as he fights against the man, trying to push him off. "Please let me go!" Stefano looks around, having no recollection of him ever leaving Palermo. His eyes stop at the painting lying on the table. The painting of a man in a well-ironed shirt, gelled-back hair, a man with eyes he knows better than anything else in the world. "Dad..." He cries as he looks at the painting of his dad, painted with such absurd accuracy. "Who made that?" He questions. The doctor looks at Piero, urging him to not reveal the truth. "A

He suddenly hears a loud crash, his body very, gifted artist..." Piero replies. Stefano freezing in its place as he sees the crushed looks at the painting a little longer, before sedan being rolled over a transport truck. He suddenly turning his head towards his best falls to the ground, his family's blood friend. "Where is...Cristina?" He asks, refusing splattered all over his body. His child's dead to accept the answer that he already knows. eyes are the last thing he sees before losing Piero looks at him. His heart hurts for his his vision again. friend.

"You can't escape anymore." He hears a voice in the dark. "You need to accept what life gives you..." He recognizes that voice. "... Stefano." He hears his dad call his name one last time before everything goes quiet. He shakes his head, not being able to meet eyes with Stefano. "A-Augusto...?" Stefano questions again. Piero shakes his head again, not being able to control his tears anymore. Horrified, Stefano leans back into his bed and

Stefano wakes up in a hospital bed, still looks up at the white ceiling. "You can't wear his paint-smeared clothes, which he escape anymore..." His dad's voice echoes in no longer recognizes. He looks around the his head. He turns his head towards the room, his eyes landing on his best friend. painting. He sees the shadow of his mother. "Piero..." He calls out. The tall man from the He realizes how much he misses her. And his

street earlier turns his head towards Stefano and rushes in to embrace him in his arms. “Stefano!” He cries. “I have been looking for you for six months! Why did you leave .. Palermo! I thought you had jumped!” Piero cried more into Stefano’s shoulder.

dad. And his wife. And his child. **“Take me home, Piero...” He says while closing his eyes, rocking his heart to sleep.**

"Time of death, 8.14 PM.

# Do you think our mind carries more pressure than our physical body?

*~ Tamish*

Amid the chaos of our everyday life, it is often an unspoken fact that mental battles are as – if not more so – tiring than the physical stresses we suffer through. As a college student engrossed in exploring creative pursuits alongside academic responsibilities, I've often pondered this enigma: Is the mind more of a burden than our physical dwelling? Amidst the never-ending search for productivity and the overflow of success stories on our social media accounts, the mental wars we fight become overwhelming.

Being perpetually driven to create and share better content than the last takes a toll on our minds. Unhealthy competition leaves our brains finding evidence of our worthlessness everywhere, searching for validation, and fuelling the imposter syndrome fires. However, we shouldn't underestimate the physical burden of this. After law sessions, a sedentary way of life and omitting self-care all cause physical tiredness and laziness. However, it's the mind that mostly dictates how we handle and address these physical strains. The mind, full of complex thoughts and feelings, is brilliantly capable of multiplying our duties, expectations, and social norms. It simmers silently at times confusing physical symptoms of stress with its dominance. Although we recognize the burden of mental stress; we also uncover tubers of strength.



Practicing self-compassion is one of the best ones to nurture a healthy mind-body relationship. Self-compassion is about being kind, understanding, and accepting of ourselves, most importantly during hard times. By giving ourselves the same compassion and care that we would give to a loved one we create resilience, minimize self-criticism, and thus nourish well-being and inner peace. The truest medicine here is laughter, a remedy drawing deep therapeutic effects for both the mind and body.

In laughter, the body releases endorphins, a natural substance that gives us a feel-good factor, helping relaxation and reducing stress. Also, laughter reinforces social ties, elevates mood, and improves the immune system. Humor and laughter become a part of our day-to-day life and stimulate resilience, build connections, and contribute to overall health. However, within this fight, we must acknowledge the symbiosis of mind and body. Equilibrium lies at that point where our mental health negatively/positively impacts our physical health.

It is in loving and cultivating our spirit through mindfulness practices, seeking brief lulls between the frantic, and accepting our faults so that we can begin to lessen the psychological weight we drag about. Nevertheless, amidst the gravity of the discussion, let's bring some humor. Life is an awesome adventure, then, isn't it? On the contrary, then dive into the mind-body confrontation.

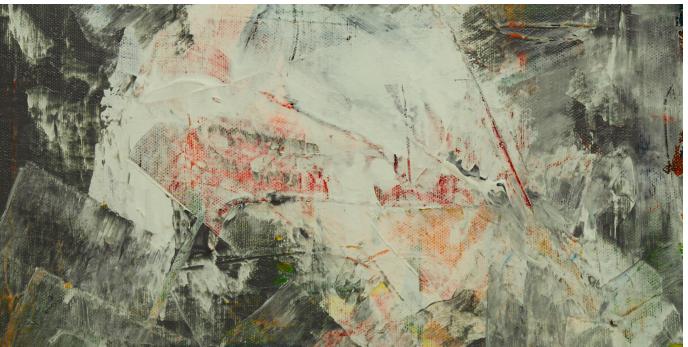


Think of our mind and body as characters in a grand adventure, constantly vying for supremacy. Let's think of our mind as a clever strategist, always plotting its next move, while our body is the tough fighter, forward through the pain of life's trials. Together they embark on the journey for equilibrium and concordance, embracing the intricacies of the present day life, and walk through the wrinkles with abeyance and atrocity. And at the point the brain seems in control the body shifts its advantage reminding us that well-being and self-care of the body do matter.

However, the human mind that is perpetually capable of invention and imagination remains to make us extend our limits and overcome our fears. Son grand aventure appele la vie, laisse-nous ne pas oublier to celebrer la subtile guignol entre esprit et corps. The fact is that when we will embrace both the solid and invisible sides of our being is when we will discover happiness and balance. And let us then, my friend, fellow traveler in the labyrinths of one's mind, always seek your way with an open mind, a resilient spirit, and, of course, an occasional chuckle. At last, the war of mind vs. the real victory is finding the harmony between the two.

# BLEAK. FACES

~ *Anonymous*



I no longer carry the weight of nights by letting  
your memories win over my thoughts.

maybe because, somewhere between those  
silent storms and cries,

my soul has finally learnt to untangle from the  
chaos of someone.

What's more tragic?  
learning the art of letting go or craving to be  
held. the curse of being forgetful,

or the fear of being constantly reminded. a fact  
that you'll accept,

or the dream that tears you apart.  
to live in a paradox that haunt, or to drown in  
reality that ache?



## EDITOR IN CHIEF



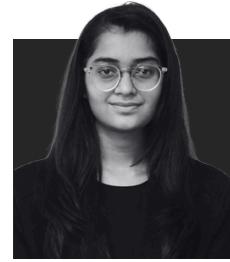
## CONTENT Writers



## EDITORS



## DESIGNERS



## SOCIAL MEDIA Strategists

