

नगरिया

Issue 2 | 2024-25

frames of
resistance: media,
memory and
marginalised voices



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Principal's *Note*

Welcome to the second issue of the magazine, Nazariya, from the Gargi College White Rose Club.

The magazine is dedicated to celebrating inclusiveness in all its forms. In a world where diversity is our greatest strength, it's imperative to cultivate environments where everyone feels valued and included. Through thought-provoking articles, inspiring stories, and insightful interviews, the aim is to shed light on the importance of embracing diversity in every aspect of our lives.

From fostering inclusivity in workplaces to promoting acceptance in communities, this magazine serves as a beacon of hope and empowerment for individuals from all walks of life. Together, let's embark on a journey towards a more inclusive society, where everyone's voice is heard, and everyone's story is valued. Congratulations and best wishes to Team WRC.

PROF. (DR.) SANGEETA BHATIA
PRINCIPAL (OFFG.)



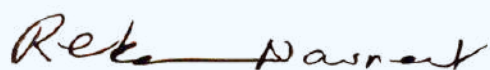
Teacher Convenor's *Note*

Heartiest Congratulations to the team of WRC for the second edition of the annual magazine, 'Nazariya' - a well documented platform, to showcase the spirit of inclusion within diversity that it stands for.

The White Rose Club is a queer-straight alliance under the 'Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, Gargi College, University of Delhi, aiming to educate and sensitize people regarding LGBTQIA+ issues.

Over the past academic year, the White Rose Club at Gargi College has been steadfast in its commitment to supporting and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community through a diverse range of events.

'Nazariya', aims to showcase the vibrant experiences and perspectives within this vibrant community, not only within Gargi College but beyond it.



PROF. REKHA NAVNEET
TEACHER CONVENOR



From the Editorial Board

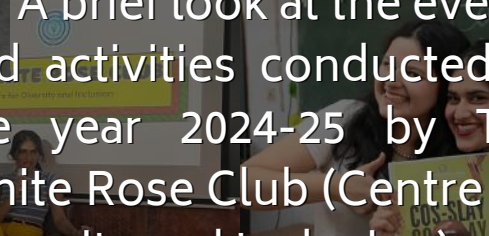
Dear Readers,

We are exhilarated to present the 2nd edition of "Nazariya", the annual magazine of The White Rose Club (Centre of Diversity and Inclusion). The theme for this year is "Frames of Resistance: Media, Memory, and Marginalised Voices". This magazine hopes to capture the evolution of the LGBTQIA+ community in the media, along with the memories of resistance against exclusion by society, whether in sports or in the granting of a simple right to come out and live as a queer individual or the right to marry in a homosexual relationship. It hopes to show a queer struggle for identity and respect, a revolution carried out through organisation of pride parades, street theatre and public demonstrations.

We are thankful to Prof (Dr.) Rekha Navneet, Dr. Anjana Neira Dev, and Dr. Shatarupa Sinha for their valuable guidance and indefinite support. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this year's magazine. Together, we have created a safe, inclusive space to discuss, advocate for equal rights, and speak out against inequality. Through this edition, we hope to raise awareness, celebrate diversity, and stand firmly against discrimination. We are thankful for every contribution - each word written, each stroke of the brush, and every minute of hardwork which has made this magazine possible.

Happy Reading!

ALLERGY



A brief look at the events and activities conducted in the year 2024-25 by The White Rose Club (Centre for Diversity and Inclusion).



pride parade

With a colourful, determined, and community-building Pride Parade that surged through Gargi, the White Rose Club, under the aegis of the Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, brought the spirit of Pride to life on campus. In addition to celebrating LGBTQIA+ identities, the event served as an appeal for unity for joyous resistance, expression, and solidarity.

Students marched in unity, demanding equality, inclusiveness, and love as rainbow flags soared high and reverberating chants of “Hey hey, ho ho, homophobia has to go” filled the campus. Posters with poignant messages lined the march route, reclaiming identity and space with style and intent. As the queer-straight alliance came together, the atmosphere was charged with enthusiasm, highlighting the value of allyship and teamwork.





The musical performance by WRC members, who took over the stage with queer anthems that had the audience moving, hands up, and spotlights gleaming, was one of the event's highlights. The performances, which were attended by a packed house, served as a reminder of the happiness that results from representation and community.

Students of Gargi College boldly displayed their identity or allyship on their skin by decorating themselves with Pride-themed designs at the face-painting station, which brought a pop of colour to the celebrations. In addition, the WRC's well-known sticker booth returned with LGBTQIA+-themed flags, stickers, and badges that eager competitors snatched up.



More than just a celebration, the Pride Parade 2024 was a powerful reminder that queer joy is political, visibility is resistance, and spaces like these are vital. The White Rose Club continues to carve out inclusive spaces where everyone regardless of how they identify can feel seen, heard, and celebrated.



anokhi charcha


On 26th November, The White Rose Club (Centre of Diversity and Inclusion) organized an enlightening Anokhi Charcha in LT-2, focusing on the intersectionality of queerness and neurodivergence. The event provided a platform for open dialogue to deepen understanding about neurodiversity within the broader context of intersecting identities. Participants noted that fear of ignorance and misrepresentation discourages open conversations, leading to stigma and erasure. The media's tendency to portray neurodivergent individuals in extreme, one-dimensional ways perpetuates stereotypes while ignoring everyday realities.

The session was particularly impactful due to the personal narratives shared by audience members. Many recounted experiences of navigating societal expectations, familial pressures to conform to neurotypical norms, and the emotional toll of feeling misunderstood. The dialogue not only validated individual experiences but also highlighted the urgent need for greater awareness and advocacy.


Key takeaways from the event included the importance of centering intersectionality in discussions about neurodivergence, improving media representation by amplifying neurodivergent voices, and fostering sensitivity through education. The Anokhi Charcha concluded on a hopeful note, leaving attendees inspired to advocate for a more inclusive and empathetic society.



Ad Reinhardt



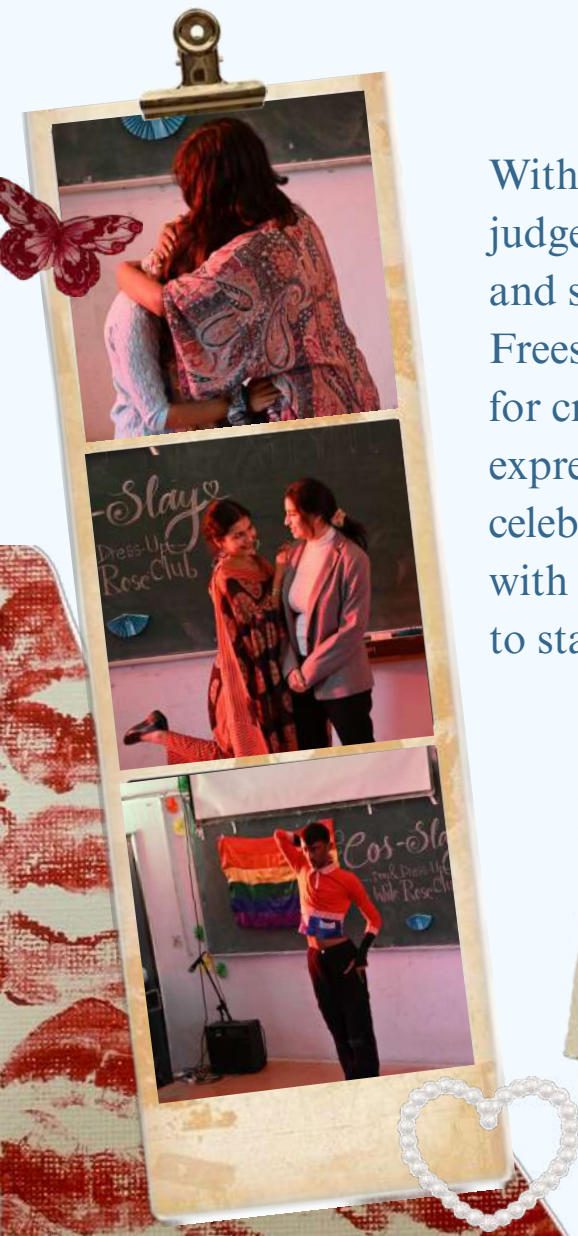
COS-Slay!



The Gargi College annual fest Reverie brought to life the spirit of Drag on stage with COS-SLAY: A Drag and Cosplay Competition, on 19th February 2025. From voguing, to costuming, to niche references that can be expressed only through the art of the vesture, the event had participants bring out their most creative tributes to pop culture through the ages.



With the commemoration of the event with our judges- Hiten Noonwal, a visionary fashion designer and storyteller with expertise in Drag, and Bruna Freespirit, a transwoman tattoo artist with a vision for creative freedom and an emphasis on free gender expression- we began a two hour journey of the celebration of identity. The judges were presented with a note of appreciation, and the performers took to stage.

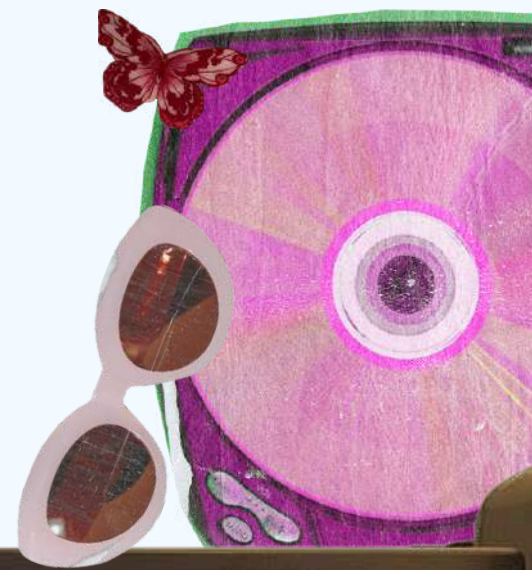


From dance performances, to acting and reenacting, to costume showcases, the performers embodied the essence of the expressive nature that Drag stands for. While announcing the results, the judges affirmed how important these spaces for expression become, encouraging both participants and audience to inculcate this energy especially on center-stage, but to also center it within their lives.



To conclude the event, WRC's in-house band, also in costume, took to performing queer classics mixed with music that augment the spirit of the event- the audience sang along to ABBA, Beach Bunny and Chappell Roan, involving the full house of the event in the HOT TO GO!

With the conclusion of this event celebrating queer resistance through performance and fashion, a space was bookmarked within White Rose history of the liberation that comes from queerness, whether it be free love or freedom of identity.



movie screening

The White Rose Club (Centre for Diversity and Inclusion) organized a Movie Screening and Panel Discussion on “Locating Queerness in Media” on 15 April 2025 in the Seminar Hall. The event sought to explore the nuanced portrayal of queer identities in contemporary media and was attended enthusiastically by students and faculty alike.



The session commenced with the screening of the critically acclaimed short film “Oranges in the Winter Sun” directed and co-written by Anureet Watta alongside Usha Joshi. The poignant narrative and direction of the film resonated deeply with the audience, shedding light on the tender and complex experiences of queer individuals.

Following the screening, a thought-provoking panel discussion was held, featuring the much loved director and co-writers of the film and further graced by Dr. Jeyakirthana. The panellists engaged in an insightful dialogue on queer representation in filmmaking and storytelling, the politics of visibility, and the phenomenon of queerbaiting in mainstream media.



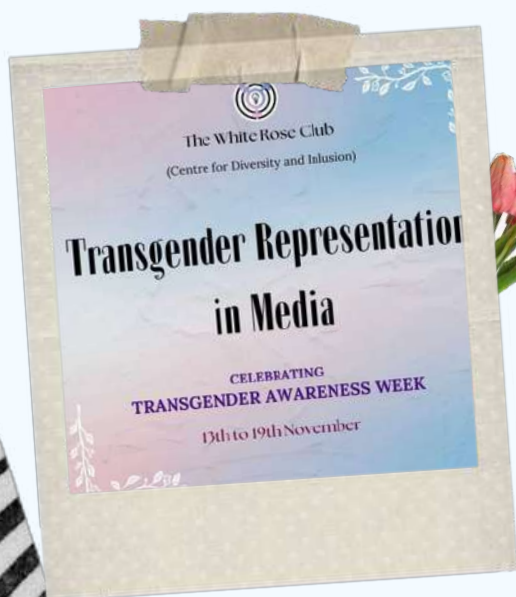


online presence



The White Rose Club has remained consistently active on its social media page throughout the session, not only covering events but also posting informative content to engage and educate its viewers.

Starting with a detailed post about pronouns, explaining pronouns and the historical usage of 'they'. This was followed by a post marking six years of the partial removal of Section 377 in India. A creative comic strip further explained non-binary identities and introduced neopronouns (like ze/zir and xe/xer).



For Bisexuality Awareness Week, myths were debunked, the history of Bi Visibility Day was shared, and issues like bi erasure and bi-curiosity were addressed also sharing bisexual representation in the media.

Transgender Awareness Week included a guide to trans terminologies and a post on trans representation in media. WRC also observed Asexual Awareness Week, Intersex Day of Remembrance and Non-Binary People's Day through informative posts and stories.

A "Drag 101" post explored the meaning, history, and Indian context of drag.

Through these efforts, The White Rose Club has used social media to spread awareness, debunk myths, and celebrate important moments in LGBTQAI+ history and culture.



media, memory
and
marginalised
voices



FEMINO MENON

The Rise of Sapphism in
Mainstream Media

By Anandita Das

is it casual now?



ueer media has existed since time immemorial – dating as far back as 2450 BCE, where a same-sex couple was recorded in Egypt.

The earliest sapphic text comes from the poetry of Sappho, a Greek poet from the island of Lesbos, who lived around the 7th century BCE. Her name also gives us the term 'sapphic', which the dictionary defines as 'attraction and love between women'. Records of same sex relationships also exist in the Kama Sutra, one of ancient India's oldest documentations of love and relationships. Furthermore, countless depictions of women in relationships with other women still stand in ancient Indian murals and engraved architecture.

Despite the countless texts accumulating over the centuries, sapphic media has stayed relatively hidden from the majority, with artists classified as 'underground' and 'niche' without gaining a name in mainstream media – writers turned down by bigger publishing houses, and movies denied distribution due to the 'inappropriate' content– the young girl with a crush on her best friend felt utterly lost and confused, unheard and feeling far too alone in the heteronormative world around her, until now. The question is, what took so damn long?



Forbidden or tragic? Pick your poison!

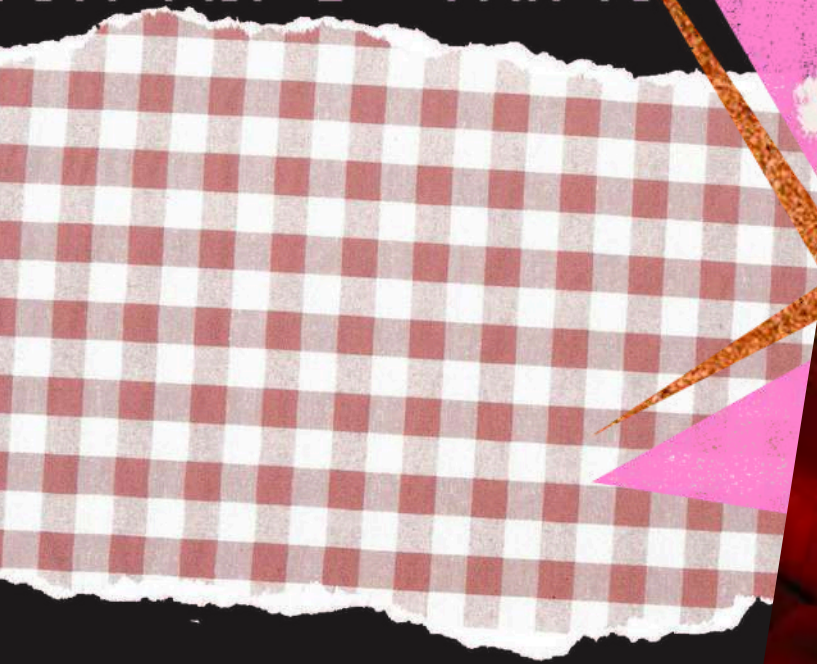
The fight against conservative propaganda and ideology has been a collective effort of every group existing within the LGBTQIA+ community. The slow, arduous, yet fruitful resistance has not come without reward, and starting from the 1960s, queer relationships began to appear in fragments in popular media, at first in the background, before gradually shifting into the spotlight. The media's essential links to public demand resulted in the introduction of what we now term 'queer subtext', which essentially left the nature of queer relationships open to interpretation, allowing them to fit into heteronormative standards (and thus, historians call them 'roommates').

Openly sapphic narratives and texts were extremely rare and controversial. The work of Sappho herself exists in fragments, the accurate number and account of all her works unknown due to the condemnation and destruction of her works due to their 'taboo' nature, particularly by Christian censors at the time.

Radclyffe Hall's 1928 novel "The Well of Loneliness" (one of the first English-language lesbian novels) was banned due to obscenity in its early days, essentially nipped at the bud. The protagonist's happy lesbian was deemed "immoral" by authorities and general public, and editions were ordered destroyed.

In an improvement, later texts and popular queer media existed only in sidelines or elegies. For the longest time in media history, sapphic characters were peripheral, tragic, or coded. A common pattern, later termed "bury your gays", would build a same-sex romance only to have one partner die or "return" to a heterosexual life. Scholars note this trope stretches back to the 19th century, and used to include queer romance without upsetting authorities or norms. The public did not mind queer relationships in the media as long as they had a tragic end, implying that such relationships were unstable and couldn't possibly continue for a lifetime like heterosexual relationships. Stereotypically, 'lesbians end up dead just at the moment when they find happiness', reflecting a long legacy of unhappy endings in lesbian narratives.





Such strong censorship and manipulation of motifs underscored how forbidden open sapphic representation was in the 20th century, defining the climate of sapphic relationships at the time as well, which resulted in countless women suppressing their identities and often 'abandoning' them to appease society. The media have, and always have, shaped the political and social climate of the current time. Up until the late 21st century, the lack of representation in text, art, and media has resulted in the undermining and belittling of sapphic relationships, building a community which sees lesbian relationships as 'misguided friendships' or 'just a phase', reinforcing the heteronormative and patriarchal notion that a woman eventually needs to settle down, specifically with a man.

Back from the dead?

The internet and especially social media have accelerated the revival of sapphism pop culture. Experts note that the COVID-19 lockdowns ironically gave many young people "the space to explore aspects of our identity", as social media usage (TikTok, Tumblr) spiked, and interaction with people became easier and more accessible with social media

(Instagram, Twitter/X). Quarantines prompted introspection and creativity; TikTok soared with content explaining LGBTQ history and personal stories. A 2022 analysis further observed that during lockdowns "resources, communities, and conversations about sexuality were more accessible than ever", contributing to a "collective awakening" amongst queer women. Almost like a silver lining in the global crisis, queer communities grew and connected, resulting in a plethora of creation and analysis.

Online queer communities, forums and internationally accessible discussions on the internet defined the new era: a digitally native, openly identifying generation demanding sapphic stories and narratives. Notably, nearly 30% of Gen Z women now identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. This massive increase reflects growing social acceptance and visibility. As more young people come out as sapphic, they expect the media to reflect their reality. It really is a femininomenon!



The Owl House (Disney) – features a canon lesbian relationship in a children’s show (Luz/Amity). She-Ra (Netflix) – enemies to lovers and childhood friends trope between the main antagonist and protagonist. Killing Eve (Netflix) – an eccentric lesbian romance that became a viral hit. Wicked (2024), the blockbuster hit movie adaption of a twenty-year-old queer text, a remake of the famous ‘Wizard of Oz’. Gentleman Jack (HBO) – A period drama about a 19th-century lesbian landowner. Arcane (Netflix) – with an established and open lesbian relationship between two main characters (also including queer subtext). These are only a few of the many texts and media of recent times that represent sapphic relationships that not only consist of sapphic relationships, but also provide them with a space to grow and take the spotlight.

Pop music has begun to celebrate sapphic love and artists have started to gain popularity in mainstream pop as well, giving perfect tunes for all the hopeless romantic girls the perfect tracks to cry to as they overthink every interaction with that one girl, wondering if it was platonic or something more. Rising stars like girl in red and Chappell Roan explicitly sing about women-loving-women relationships. Established pop stars (e.g. Billie Eilish, Ariana Grande, Miley Cyrus) and alt-pop acts have also started to reference queer love openly now. Critics call this a “golden age of sapphic pop”, seeing an increasing number of sapphic artists and gay-inclusive lyrics which drives visibility in music, giving the coming generations something to turn to when they search for meaning in the intricacies of their emotions while trying to realise and define their identities.

Another interesting result of this revival exists in the rethinking of fresh perspectives on existing classical literature, shining light on historical and contemporary texts, uncovering queer subtext that was once misinterpreted and misrepresented. The new generation of experts and academics have revisited older works, recognising previously overlooked dynamics of emotional intimacy between same-sex characters in films, literature, and television that were once perceived through conventional heterosexual lenses. The reevaluation has revealed that many texts, though not explicitly queer, contain layers of longing and connection that can be interpreted as subversive expressions of same-sex attraction. A few such examples can be seen in the records of Emily Dickinson's life, and the famous gothic novel *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu, giving new readers a fresh perspective and historical account of the understanding of sapphic relationships. By applying a queer lens to past works, critics have broadened the scope of interpretation, acknowledging the coded queerness present in earlier media despite societal repression. This shift not only reshapes our understanding of historical narratives but also enriches current storytelling, creating space for more inclusive and diverse representations of LGBTQ+ identities in mainstream culture.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive developments, there are still a lot of issues that require revision. Due to the persistence of conservative and puritan ideology in several pockets across the globe, backlash and criticism overall still persists, labelling sapphic and queer media as 'vulgar' or 'uncouth' or 'offensive' to certain traditions, religions and cultures. Coding and marginalising of queer characters and damage to queer representation persists through the commonly used technique of "queerbaiting", wherein the writers and producers of famous and popular media attract a large audience by advertising their films or text as queer, only to uphold heteronormative standards and erase all queer subtext previously highlighted. The sapphic



photograph by Ratnisha



photograph by Ratnisha

boom has undoubtedly invited scrutiny about the quality of representation. Critics warn of lesbian tokenism – inserting a gay character as a prop (often the only gay friend in a group) without depth. The media also often hypersexualizes lesbian characters “in a heterosexual gaze,” pigeonholing them as either “butch” or “lipstick lesbians” for male audiences. Advertising campaigns have been called out for exploiting sapphic imagery to appear progressive, while not supporting real inclusion behind the scenes.

The fight for accurate representation is far from over, especially in Indian cinema and text. The existence of accurate representation is especially important, since music and the media are the only accessible sources of guidance and reference in life for many queer individuals. Sapphic media must hence broaden beyond the current mainstream image, and industry watchers note that much queer media still revolve around the patriarchal standards of women. Evidently, we have a long way to go, but not all is glum and gloomy! As the lens of queer representation continues to widen, it is our role as members of the community to recognise and improve the stories once silenced or concealed, and celebrate them for the love and complexity they’ve always contained.

By Ratnisha

Art by Sachi Arora



counting
to ten
and
never
found .

I think God misheard me when I blew out my eighth candle and wished, “I want to be invisible!” I forgot to add that I wanted to be invisible—just so that my delicate tip-toes under the moon won’t wake up my mom when I steal a cookie, just well enough for me to win a game of hide and seek.

Well, I did hide so well, too well actually, without even needing any magic to help me. I hid so obediently that everybody stopped looking for me. Now I sit here on the sidelines, desperate for attention, begging to be acknowledged. I scream and cry out for my people, I stomp my feet heavily on the ground from dusk to dawn, shatter all the jars of cookies, curses and cries on the floor but not a head turns around.

Maybe they never saw me to begin with. Maybe people like me—who exist at the cusp of everything, were never part of the picture anyway. It turns out, the rules were already written before I got here, and kids like me were scribbled out before the game even started. We are too queer, too brown, too complicated to be framed neatly. There’s beauty in that, of course, that we will always exceed the boundaries they set and colour everything that comes our way in our shades. We make it beautiful because we are beautiful—but that doesn’t mean that we don’t notice how small that frame is for us, as if they don’t even try to fit us in. Yes, I enjoy standing out, I enjoy being different, but it gets tiring.

It gets tiring because my invisibility is no longer letting me win the game—it’s making me lose it. My invisibility is stitched into the seams of every classroom, every home, every headline. Silence isn’t accidental, it’s designed. It’s heavy, like a hand pressing down your mouth, parching like a sun that takes your shine away, piercing like the eyes that glare. It’s stitched into what stories get told on TV, whose faces get paraded during pride month,

whose histories get preserved in museums, and whose names get whispered and lost.

It’s in the textbooks that pretend queerness started with white men holding rainbow flags. It’s in the glossy news segments that forget to mention the ones murdered quietly, the ones who get bullied because of what they wear and how they look, the ones who get harassed because they chose to love. It’s in the way they kill us off first in the movie, crop out our faces in the magazines, and how they say the word “diversity” as if it’s a slur, a threat to their boring binary bland lives.

Oh, but they are so kind as well, right? Because they will let you stay! If you’re pretty enough, soft enough, silent enough. If you don’t scare them, your existence doesn’t scream. If you fold yourself into a neat biddable little box and put a bow on it, you sand down every edge until you don’t even recognise yourself in the mirror. If you shine just right, speak just right, bleed just right—never too loud, never too bright. They will pin a pretty gold star on your grave and say you were a good one.

Silence isn’t a crack you fall through by mistake. It’s a systematically sharpened knife. It’s the law, the curriculum, the casting call. It’s the invitations that never come. It’s the family members who look right through you. They’re the ones who told you when you were young to count to ten and come look for them, just to get rid of you as they go on with their day.

Silence is policy. Silence is branding. Silence is control. Silence is power. Silence is survival. But only and only for them, never for us.

I am not invisible by mistake, their ignorance isn’t innocent but deliberate. Turns out that I was there all along. I never disappeared. They just closed their eyes and called it mercy.

BECAUSE

we

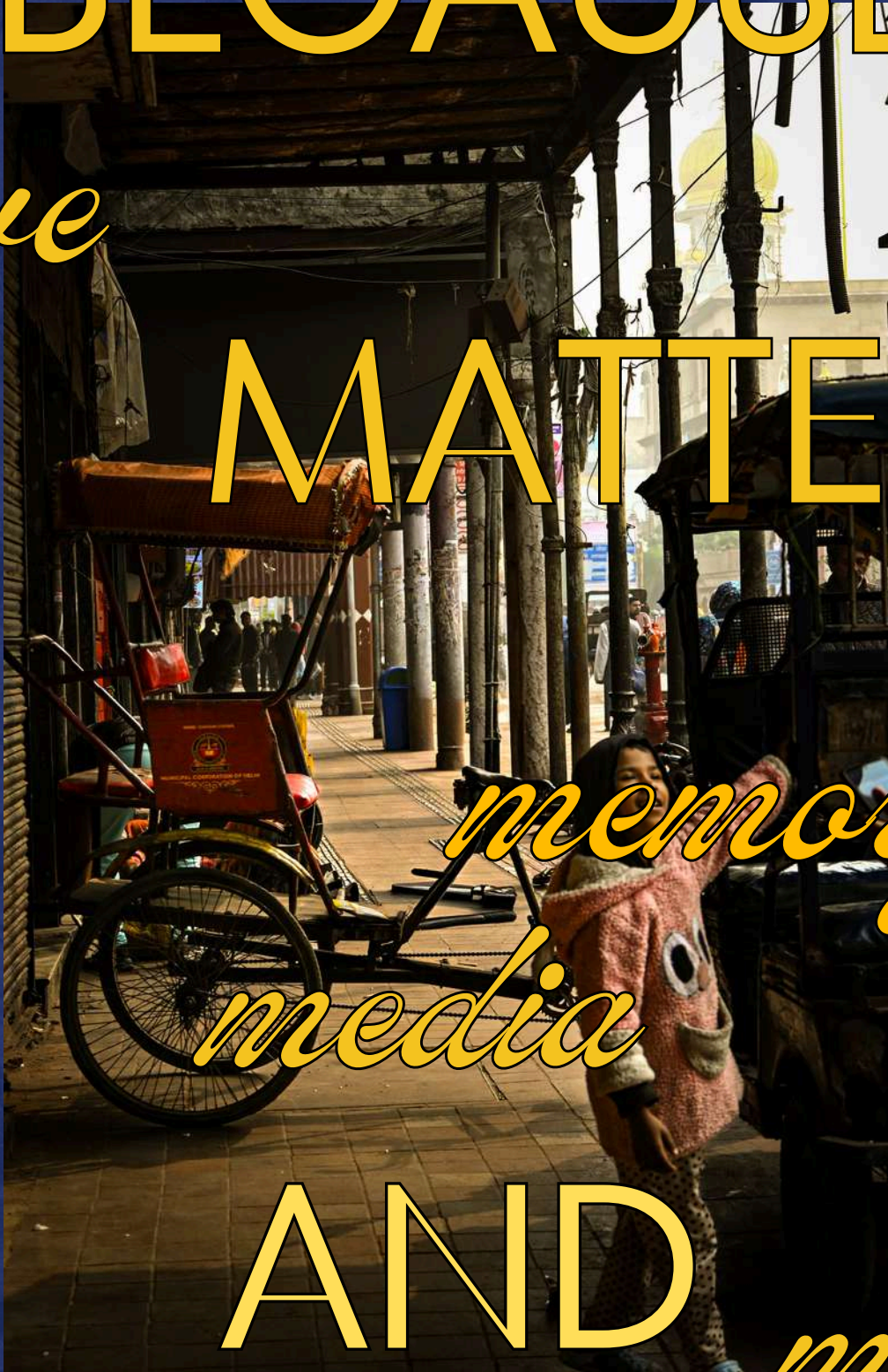
MATTER:

memory

media

AND

me



By Triyanshi Singh

Photograph by Shruti Bhasin

A week ago, I found myself in conversation with an old friend about the LGBTQIA+ community. It started casually, but quickly turned into something that lingered long after.

He asked, "Do you really think it's important to be like that?"

I replied, "Why not? It's their identity. Shouldn't that be important?"

He shrugged and said, "But how hard can it be to just embrace what you're born as? Just play the role. Why create so much chaos?"

I wish I'd had the right words then. I wish I had told him that what he calls "chaos" is someone else's existence. That not all roles handed to us at birth are made to fit. That he was thinking only about the comfort of society—not the cost of silence paid by the individual.

Frustrated and unsettled, I turned to someone who had always been my calm in the chaos. I asked him the same question: "Is it really all just unnecessary noise? Is queerness just a disturbance in society's so-called harmony?"

He didn't say much. Just one sentence:
"No, because every individual matters."

That was it. The truth I had been grasping for. That's what we keep trying to express—through protest, poetry, art, and love: every soul matters. Because society isn't made of statues and silence. It's made of people. Of lives. Of dreams that may not look like yours—and that's the beauty of it.

So no, it's not chaos. It's courage.

And in a world so quick to label queerness as "too much" or "not real enough," the media becomes a battlefield. For decades, it erased queer lives, rewrote queer love into shame, and made tragedy

the only story we were allowed to tell. But when queer people reclaim their voice—through reels, films, books, zines—they reclaim the power to define themselves. They become frames of resistance.

The media have long decided who gets to be seen and who gets to be silenced. Too often, queerness is either mocked or ignored as if it is invisible. But every time a queer person steps in front of a camera, picks up a pen, or claims a mic—they're not just telling a story. They're taking space. They're saying, "I exist. I belong."

Our history isn't just built on Pride marches and Supreme Court verdicts. It's also built on quiet acts of defiance. On people who loved in secret. Who carved out joy in the margins. Who stitched community out of rejection.

It's not just a struggle. It's a joy. Radical, rebellious, unapologetic joy.

And in a country like ours—layered with caste, class, gender, religion, and language—queerness never walks alone. It intersects. It complicates. It expands. It challenges everything we thought we knew about identity.

As the brilliant and defiant Geet from *Jab We Met* once said:

"Main apni favourite hoon."

That, too, is resistance—learning to be your own favourite in a world constantly asking you to be someone else.

So no—this is not chaos.

This is truth. This is memory. This is media with meaning.

This is us—existing, remembering, and resisting.

Because every individual matters.
And every story deserves to be told.

COMING OUT

Someone told me it isn't a good idea to be yourself
It is good to repress and depress as per the onerous elves
I said but elves come once at Christmas until then can I come out?
They said but then you will be in doubt;
The bad girl who will not get any presents
But what is the worth of those presents who make me sacrifice my identity

Someone told me it isn't a good idea to be yourself
So I ran away to a white castle
Where I found people like me who said you don't have to repress
And can come out and climb to the cloud of happiness
Where I can say I am queer and I am not a bad girl who won't get presents

Someone told me it isn't a good idea to be yourself
So, I defied and lifted the pride flag over myself
Feeling the warmth of all the colours where I found the soul for which I quenched
Enough of the hide and seek; I am tired of covering me
Lying about some boy I liked when all I wanted was to kiss that girl twice

Someone told me it isn't a good idea to be yourself
So, I jumped off the fences and ran away
Leaving quite early at the dawn of this phase
It is someone's personal revolution, which is apt for many
To break the walls which are too rigid
Leaving behind the people you love in
All the judgement, which you have to face but probably worth to survive
Cause the closet is an awful place to die!

By Sachi Arora



Photograph by Shruti Bhasin

GREAT ACTORS

a short story

Written by Ananta
Art by Sachi Arora

“Oh, are you single, boi?” A man with an unusual, girlish walk kept his hand on another man's chest, leaning in and blinking rapidly. Other men with weird expressions created some distance, saying,

“Oh, I just have a female wife.”

A man with nail polish clicked his tongue and looked toward the audience. “Chh, this one's mingled too!” He then ran with a speed and grace that seemed almost unnatural, his movements undeniably the type of run no girl does, yet it's a so-called girlish walk. The audience laughed, but one boy did not.

That boy, observing it all, took a deep breath. He left the theatre and headed to his secret base where all his friends gathered.

“Hey, Aakash. We've decided on a role for you. It's a girl's part since we're in a hurry and there are no other lead females available,” said one of his closest friends.

“A female lead? This is the second time I'm getting this! What lines does that character even have besides asking the male lead to plan the plot? And those girlish dramas! Not to mention that silly run—only to trip over a tiny rock and wait for the main hero to save her!” Aakash said, frustrated.

His friends tried to comfort him.

“Come on, man! It's just acting; it won't make you a girl, haha,” joked the tallest amongst them, who was also the male lead of the drama—Aadi.

“B-but... fine!” Aakash replied as he observed the long, curvy eyelashes of the tallest boy. Aadi's nose had a little bump that looked cute, and his kind words always lifted the team's spirits whenever they felt low.

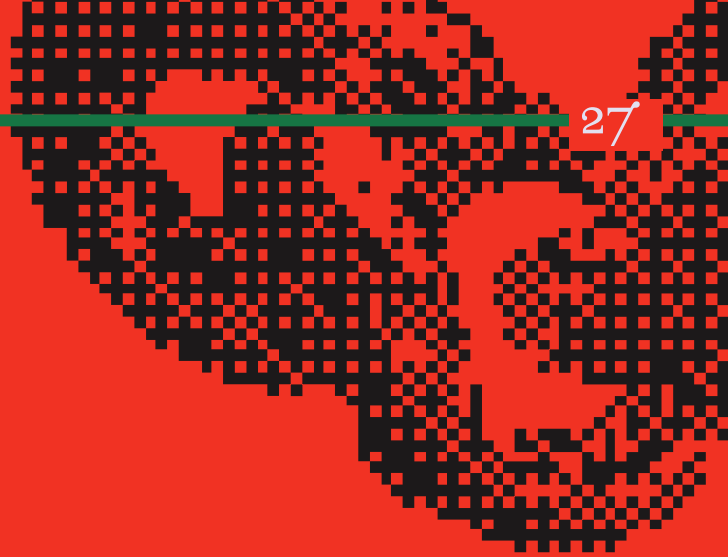
Aakash realised he was staring too much and snapped out of it. It was just... admiration? Of course, it was! He reassured himself.

As the drama started, Aakash, in a woman's costume, called out for the male lead to save him.

“Oh! Romeo, you've come! Do you even have a plan? Because even if I want to come up with one, these writers always cut those parts!”

Aadi, as Romeo, took his bride-to-be in his arms and delivered his lines: “Of course, I have a plan, Juliet, because magic that you don't have, that is a brain. The plan is to run, which I know you won't be able to do in this gown, but still, what I say is right, because that's how the traditional setup is!” Aakash found himself in Aadi's arms as he delivered his lines, and he couldn't help but notice the warmth of the embrace—it felt like another home. The audience laughed, and when the curtains fell, Aadi hugged Aakash and the other team members to celebrate the event's success. Later, when Aakash's classmates came to him backstage, they teased him.





“Ooye, Juliet! Are you sure you’re not the real Juliet, huh, Aakash? Hahaha!” “Why were you even in the play?” they joked.

“It was to support the male lead!” other boys teased with a grin.

“Other boys are taller than him, hahaha. He doesn't even have a beard. Perfect for the 'save me' act! Hahaha!” said one boy, laughing with his friends.

Aadi sensed Aakash's discomfort and said with a smile, “Only a beard and tall height is what a man is supposed to have? Haha. What kind of costume party is this? That makes a chimpanzee a man haha”

Aadi’s joke somehow made Aakash feel lighter, as the focus shifted away from him.

However, comments from his classmates hit him harder when his drama teacher pulled him aside and said, “Good acting, Aakash, but don’t do the ‘feminine’ touch too much. It’s... distracting, okay?”

Every day, a random group of boys called him "Ooye Juliet! Won't you dance for me, huh?" and laughed. It was still tolerable until Aadi started maintaining a distance from him. Even when confronted, Aadi told him how bad an influence he was, according to his parents.

Aakash listened as tears welled in his left eye. He went to an abandoned storage room and cried, questioning why his heart felt like it was burning.

It felt as though something had shattered deep inside him, leaving broken pieces that would never be whole.

In that room, he found a diary belonging to someone else. Rohan, 2009 batch-suicide ex-student as his identity couldn't be accepted by his parents and those around him.

It read:

“It's just a role. I just have to act to be a saviour and daring—violent to be accepted as masculine. It's just an act.”

“ I have to pretend to be numb, to drink or smoke instead of talking about my feelings. I'd rather hate anyone different from me instead of considering them human.”

“ I'd rather boast that I never hugged my father instead of communicating with him. It's just an act.”

“ But for how long? Forever?”

“My script is already in flames weeping! This world has greater actors than me.”

Aakash reads and wipes his tears. He burnt the diary, as the words binding fear struck pages burnt and ashes free to roam.

THE END

DISCLAIMER - This story is based on pure fiction.

Silent Blooms: How Violets Spoke Queer Love When Words Couldn't

By Arshpreet Kaur

In cultures where open queer expression was forbidden, lovers often turned to coded symbols to speak when words could not. Among the most enduring of these symbols is the violet—quiet yet powerful—serving as an emblem of queer women’s love and resistance from antiquity to today.

The violet’s story traces back to Ancient Greece, where the poet Sappho of Lesbos (c. 600 BCE) celebrated love between women in lyrical fragments, frequently invoking violets as symbols of beauty, intimacy, and erotic longing. Through her poetry, the violet became forever intertwined with sapphic desire, laying the roots of a symbolism that would resurface across centuries.

As queer history unfolded, violets continued to bloom in coded gestures of connection. In 1926, Édouard Bourdet’s controversial play *La Prisonnière* (The Captive) carried the symbol into modern theatre. In it, one woman sends bunches of violets to another—a clear nod to Sappho’s legacy. The play’s open exploration of lesbian love caused an uproar, sparking widespread calls for boycotts and censorship. The backlash revealed the intense societal resistance to queer narratives, even as the violet itself quietly persisted as a symbol of identity and defiance.

During the mid-20th century, violets became part of a broader coded language in response to heightened repression. Under Hollywood’s Hays Code (1934–1968), explicit depictions of homosexuality were banned, forcing filmmakers and writers to find subtle ways to allude to queer themes. Visual cues—like violet flowers, lavender lighting, and purple costumes—offered a kind of silent acknowledgement, visible only to those who knew how to read them. Films such as *Rebecca* (1940) and various stage adaptations of forbidden romances used such imagery to communicate sapphic subtext without overtly breaking censorship rules.

Meanwhile, the 1950s Lavender Scare—a federal purge of LGBTQ+ government workers under Executive Order 10450—equated queerness with “moral weakness,” escalating the stakes of visibility. Violets became more than art; they were acts of survival. Exchanged in private or woven into the media, they signalled kinship in a world where exposure meant unemployment, imprisonment, or worse.

Today, even as legal and social acceptance of queer love has advanced, the violet remains a potent reminder of those who once had to speak in petal-thin code when “outing” meant social ruin or worse. Symbols like violets carry intergenerational memory, linking Sappho’s ancient Lesbos to modern screens, stages, and pride marches. In honouring the violet’s quiet, persistent bloom, we honour the courage of every queer person who ever needed a secret language to say, “I love you.”

WHEN
GOD
WORE
BLUE
NAILS

By Maria

Once back in 2017, Geis pressed a fact of an off-colored tale about a Bollywood actor in our hostel. It coiled in me like a worm in an orchard apple, and that night I dreamt of him peeling the wallpaper from my skull. I woke up slick with fever, and I went home. The walls at home were not white. They were the color of old soap and dying teeth. That's when I met Miss K , the nurse that took care of me for a month, my very first muse.

I remember her. Vividly. Painfully. The first time I met her, my nails scraped soft crescents into the meat of my elbows. A reflex, like prayer. Her hair was long, unnaturally long, with dead-blond strips bleeding out like dried sunlight. She stood there—no, hovered—like the sun in a December sky: cold, golden, unreachable.

The scent of cucumbers elbowed past the ghost of IV needles, sterile and medicinal. A crescendo of a queer fear and with the thrill of chemicals around my brain , I couldn't feel anything physically, when she injected me —like being touched by God, if God wore blue fingernail polish and a state-issued uniform stitched from the fabric of broken lullabies.

Her freckles—tiny constellations—mapped out a version of grace I could never hold. I wanted to drown in that smile, let it swallow me like the sea swallows a paper boat. Even her mole, tucked like a secret beside her eyelid, had gravity, swallowing me whole and whole. I think—I know—I saw a halo. Light carved her silhouette like a sacrament.

The weight of our gaze hung too heavy; it took me to the earth and unstrung me from it all at once. My breath curdled with panic. My body, always louder than my voice. I ran away. I didn't smile. I didn't even flinch.

I felt like a burning church. I questioned my sin, infatuated by a woman when we both are supposed to marry a man someday.

Yesterday, I found out she has two daughters. And just had a son. I think of that Friday—the last Friday. If the thin veneer of skin and bone between us had collapsed, I wonder if death would have been kinder. I wish she would have killed me that very Friday.

Doesn't it hurt,
When you throw away
a piece of your identity?

Doesn't it pinch,
When you try for years,
maybe decades
But you are brushed off
so thoughtlessly?

Corrupt, old men sit on that seat
Powerless pink dresses lay in front of them.
Choice is theirs
The throne is theirs.
Everyone bows before them
Conditions set in the most expensive stone.
Acceptably intelligent
Efforts to be polite and presentable
Be threatening and you are pushed aside
Such is the world of patriarchy.
Be a monkey

Or be a yellow crocodile,
Choice is yours
But it isn't mine.
I live in a box far, far away
In a world of idealism
Romanticism
Wishful realism.
Come, I will show you the way,
The deviation isn't long
The struggle isn't hard
But the intention should be clear.

They never even looked at my street.
Drowned in paperwork
Bored with their lives
Hungry for power
Exhibition for wannabe dominance,
Just a replication of thousands of
storylines.

I am not another damsel in distress
I am not a princess waiting to be
rescued.
I have a voice I use
I have a heart I show
I have a soul you don't
I am unique, I know.

Umanshi Garg

Patriarchy

Rainbow's integrity

And when it all gets too much
for you to hold in,
I'll be there as an empty vessel
for you to pour in.

For you, my dear,
I'm here to take all the risks.
For us and beyond,
we're here to trust the bridge

The bridge built on love and petty—
love coming from them,
petty coming from ourselves
as we turn our cold backs on confetti,

confetti that was beige in colour—
was too much of conformity
and too little of integrity
for you and me, who ran off of a rainbow.

by Arshpreet Kaur

History – the study of past events, particularly in human affairs,
 But that's not it; history is like a little crack in time,
 Open to let you peep into things and people that are long gone,
 I look at my favourite place, yellow, blue and green,
 Then I look at a black and white picture of it from years ago,
 And I wonder when did the place lose all its colour,
 The yellow, blue and green now covered in a smokey rage,
 The water contaminated by years of what humans did,
 But sometime, years ago, I am sure it was pure,
 Ofcourse, I am not just talking about the water,
 History is rage,
 Against your own kind.

The study of past events, particularly in human affairs,
 That can't be all, history is smelling the freshly baked cookies that grandma used to bake, Olfactory memory?
 But then you go on to how you used to sit there listening to her, How you watched some Marathi soap and then suddenly asked her what that one word meant, You remember her by the watches she left behind and the black and white pictures from when she was young,
 You wonder if you would ever be as resilient as she was, you look up to her, You still remember the way she told you about grandpa it was almost like you met him, History is remembrance,
 Of people, you met and people you didn't.

Particularly in human affairs?
 So I go up to my grandpa and ask how he met my grandma,
 They say they met when they were in college, They are still together,
 While I wonder when was the last time I held her hand before I had to let her go, but they say history repeats, right?
 Relations prevailed in wars and partitions,
 Love just grows over time,
 History is a love story.

Study of past events?
 So I go back to the letters that have no receivers,
 The guns that kill,
 The people that die through fault of governments,
 The families that have to remember them by bloodstained uniforms, In an era of no photographs,
 History is painful.

They ask me to speak of history,
 So I speak of rage, remembrance and love,
 Resonating stories of war and stories of love,
 History comes back to you,
 Like humming a familiar tune but you don't remember the song, In the form of a soft breeze but you don't know where it's coming from,
 Like a warm hug that you longed for in a time you barely remember now,

The past comes back to you,
 In the form of tears in a war museum,
 or when you wear the same smile as your grandma had, or after you watch Hachi and miss your childhood dog, And in this sphere we call earth and the circle we call life, history repeats not by itself,
 But because humans do.

The Little Crack in Time

Media recommendations

To end on a lighter note, here is a list of movies, books and albums to watch, listen to and read as a queer individual, ally, or someone who's simply questioning their sexuality! Remember, you are heard, you are valid, and you are beautiful :)

Arcane, Netflix



Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Jeanette Winterson



Red Wine Supernova



Red Wine Supernova, Chapell Roan

Ek Ladki ko Dekha toh aisa laga, Netflix



Killing Eve, Netflix

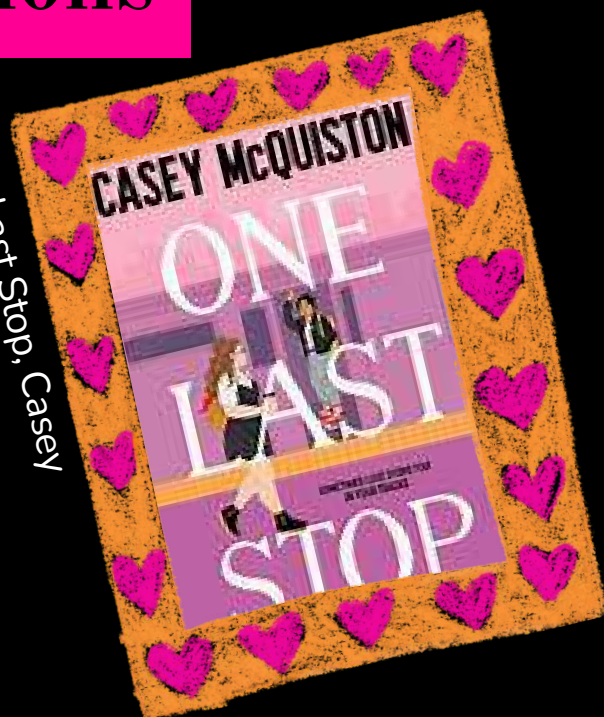


Media recommendations

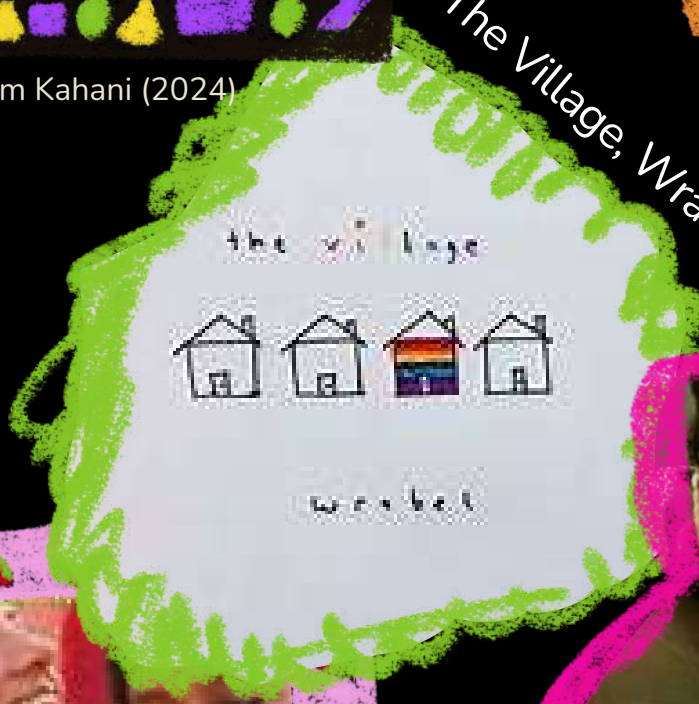


Amar Prem Ki Prem Kahani (2024)

One Last Stop, Casey
McQuiston



The Village, Wrabel



Fire



Kaathal:
The Core



The Class Of 2025



Parineeta Jagtap

der aaye ~~derust~~ aaye
fashionably der aaye



Vainavi Vadnere

Probably having a cold brew



Palak Pawar

Essential part of the college
unpaid labour force



Disha Barwal

lesbian.....for now



Ishika Raj

Stable? That's for horses



Riddhima Rajput

Only if I could have 'abababababa'
my way through college



Dixha Negi

Don't give up on your dreams.
Keep Sleeping. 😴



Umanshi Garg

I am the gay that can drive, do
math and cook. Beware, lesbians!



Yashasvi



Sachi Arora

My future is darker than the
darkness under my eye.



Mouli Garbyal



Bhavya Rai

they call me 007 - 0 motivation,
0 submissions on time, 7 dirty
matcha lattes a day



Ananta

Adulthood- the unforgivable curse
they don't teach at hogwarts



Arshpreet Kaur

Emotionally attached? Me? Haha.
Anyway. Don't leave. Please.



Ratnisha

good taste is a moral obligation



Raisha Yadav

If glitter, gay panic and existential dread had a group chat.



Anjum

she john on my wick, till i baba on her yaga.



Khushi Verma



Natalie Joseph

delusion got me here



Mahika Shrivastava

I'm exactly like my laptop- both of us crash a lot and desperately need sleep mode



Malavika



Anuja Bhargava



Khushi Gupta

Hamilton is the greatest play of all time



Plavita

It's never lupus.



Meenal



Reva Godbole

wahe guru ji da khalsa



Khushi Singh

All these years in the closet and yet I still don't have a fashion sense



Shubhra Goel

hanging by a thread.
(the thread is wrc)



Anshika Shukla

I identify as a human.



Manasvi Kalra



Charu Yadav

I remix rules with glitter and grit.



Shyla Handa



Chinmaya Puri

just a jar of strawberries
pretending to be a person (failing)



Kyrah



Sania Saifi

no rizz just big brown eyes and the
desire to learn more and love women



Ayati Saini

Be the spring even when the
leaves turn pale and plant
wither for you're the essence



Trisha

new liver, same eagles



Shruti



Punya



Vega Dhingra

Manic pixie dream girling my
way through life



Nishtha



Anushka Pal



Bratati Mitra



Asmi Anand

a life devoid of meaning, is a life of
total freedom
-baby queen in we can be anything

Note from The Core Team



As this issue comes to an end, so does our tenure as the core team. This past year has been magnificent for us, all emotions captured in this labour of love we call Nazariya. WRC has been a lot more than just a society to us, it has been a space that offered love, comfort and family when we needed it the most. We had an eventful year, with a vibrant collection of ideas coming together to form a beautiful picture we will forever hold dear. But beyond the successes, it's our bond that strengthened with the shared meals, film recommendations and late night conversations. For all this and more, we thank our lovely team, who have been the pillars behind the execution of every idea. Thank you once again readers for joining us in this journey!

With Love,
Parineeta, Vainavi, Palak, Disha, Ishika, Riddhima

Credits:

Ananta
Disha
Parineeta

Arshpreet
Ishika
Plavita
Sachi

Bhavya
Nishtha
Ratnisha
Vainavi

Chinmaya
Palak
Riddhima



नज़रिया

NAZARIYA

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