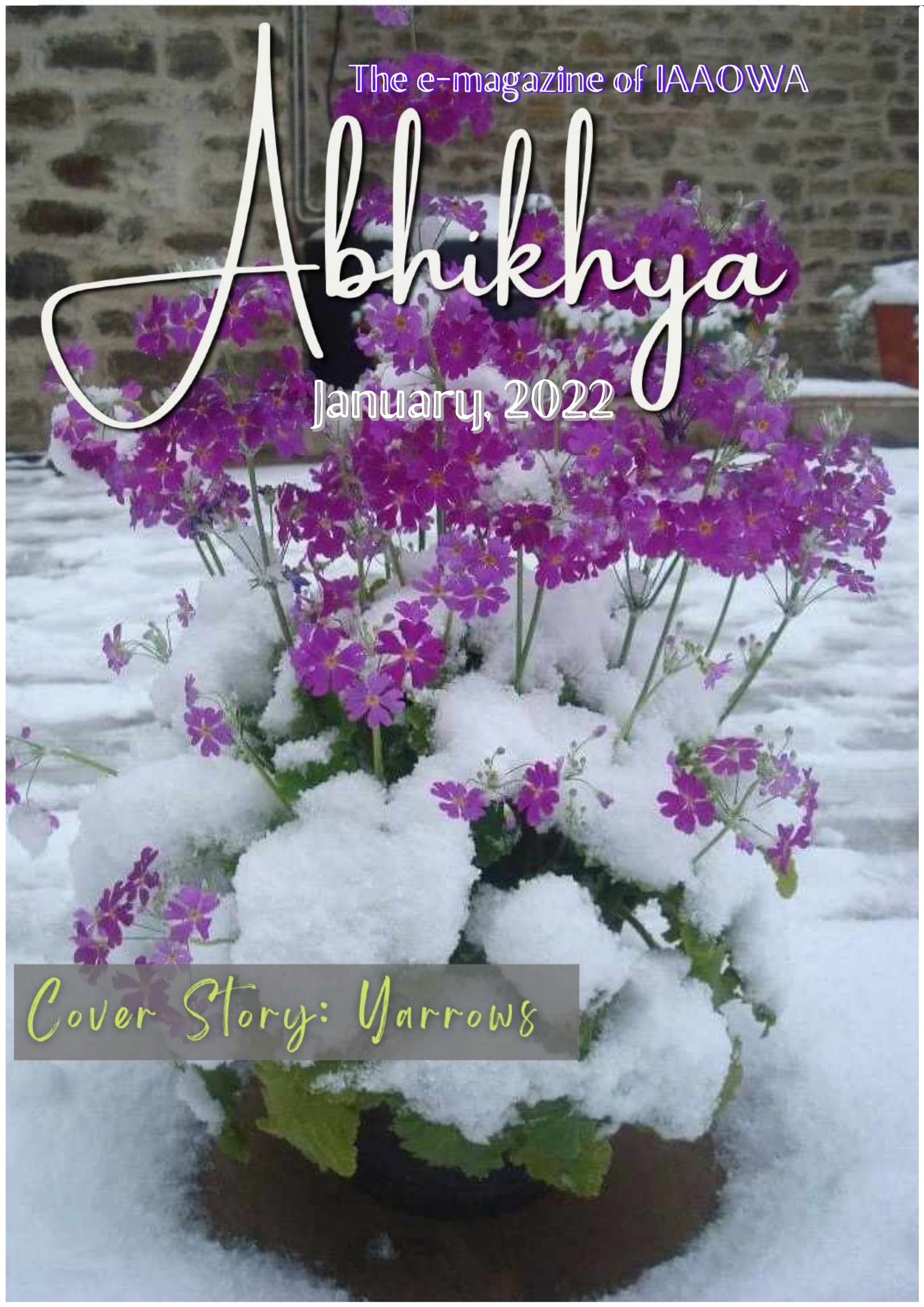


The e-magazine of IAAOWA

Abhikhya

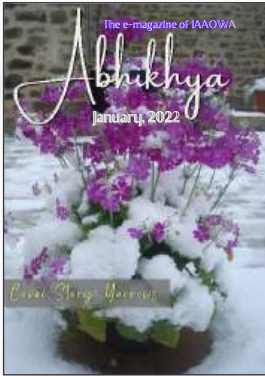
January, 2022

Cover Story: Yarrow



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Front Cover



Pic. by

Dr. Vishal Desai

Design by

Dr. Astha Giri

Back Cover



Pic. by

Dr. Astha Giri

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PATRON'S MESSAGE



Dr. Smita Murmu
Patron, IAAOWA

Dear Readers,

As we usher in yet another new year, Year - 2022, I wish all prosperity and good health to you and your loved ones!

I impress on all the members to take two minutes to pay our sincere condolences to our officers and their family members, who lost their loved ones to the pandemic in 2021.

I am glad to learn that our premier issue of *Abhikhya* was hailed by all our readers. I thank you all for the very encouraging suggestions on the premier edition of *Abhikhya*!

IAAOWA constantly looks forward to bring out interesting and meaningful half yearly magazine for its members. This edition of *Abhikhya* magazine focuses on the 'Yarrows' - the nostalgic place where every IA&AS Officer commences his/her journey in Indian Audit & Accounts Department. A cherished place where the IA&AS Officer is groomed and travels the journey from being a student to becoming a young officer to shoulder the bureaucratic responsibilities. This edition opens the window of the past through its articles, to walk the officers through their memory lane of time spent at Yarrows.

Undoubtedly, this creative endeavour will bring out an array of artistic expressions with distinct individual signatures. I appreciate and applaud the editorial team for their successful completion of this tedious yet daunting task of putting together the myriad thoughts of our officers into a meaningful and delightful visual and literary fest called '*Abhikhya*'. I hope this edition brings a smile on your face, as you get glimpses of Yarrows which will rekindle your treasured thoughts.

IAAOWA bid goodbye to one of our own, Ms. Alpana Prasad and welcomed the newly elected President of IAAOWA - Ms. Vani Sriram. I wish good luck to Alpana, and extend a warm welcome to Vani on board team IAAOWA.

The situation of the global pandemic had slightly bettered in the second half of 2021, and IAAOWA celebrated, with stipulated protocols, a musical Garba and a delightful Diwali. We hoped to herald into a much brighter and promising 2022. '*Omicron*' however dented our hopes, but our strong IAAOWA Association stands united and undeterred and keeps striding ahead. We shall, together sail through this too! We all need togetherness and positivity during these uncertain times!

Once again, wishing you all a very prosperous 2022!

FAREWELL BY FORMER PRESIDENT



Ms. Alpana Prasad
Outgoing President, IAAOWA

Writing down my final goodbye as the President IAAOWA feels surreal to say the least. Many memories run through my mind as I sit down to pen my thoughts. I still recall all the discussions I had with our past president Mrs Pushpa Tiwari for taking up this challenge and immense support from our then secretary Mrs Kartika Vikram. That was the beginning of my beautiful journey with IAAOWA. These ten months have not only been full of excitement but have changed my life in so many ways for the better. I have grown in so many ways with all the incredible women who are a part of this organisation; and I will forever be grateful for the same. From the bursts of energy and enthusiasm in planning various activities, to the bond that we all shared, IAAOWA has been an unforgettable journey.

When I joined Mr. Jayanti Prasad at Yarrows in 1987, I did not anticipate that down the line, I would find a new family. Never did I think that I would develop an affiliation for a service I was not even working for, or that one day I would be stepping down as the President of IAAOWA.

As we move into a new phase in life, I cannot help but reminisce about my long journey, where we all have gone through many emotions and experiences, and have only come out stronger as a community. As a career woman myself in a robust fashion industry, it was not easy to fulfil all the spousal obligations but as the saying goes - all's well that ends well - and I am thankful to many in IA&AS service for their consistent support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude. A very big thank you to Dr. Smita Murmu Ma'am for her constant support and show of appreciation. I certainly would not have been able to start these new ventures without the consistent hard work and enthusiasm of Ms. Anita Johari, Ms Anshu Jaiswal, Ms Swati Singh and Dr Arpita Desai. As I welcome Ms Vani Sriram as the new President, I know that the IAAOWA family will move on from strength to strength and achieve even greater heights.

All the very best!

PRESIDENT'S PREFACE



Ms. Vani Sriram
President, IAAOWA

Friends, greetings and best wishes to you all and your families for a safe and happy New Year 2022.

We had a challenging year 2021 which reminded us about the imponderables, vicissitudes and uncertainties faced by mankind in dealing with the pandemic. It brought home, yet again, the fact that we are all in it together and the only way to emerge stronger out of it is by standing by and supporting each other. In its own humble way, the IAAOWA has done just that. Right from creating awareness among the children and adults of the IA&AS family about the precautions to be taken in confronting the challenges posed by Covid-19; advocating, demonstrating and training our kids in yoga and breathing techniques; encouraging tree plantation and protection of environment; lending a helping hand in sustaining the livelihoods of the weavers of Banaras; to ensuring that our members continue to enjoy the socio-cultural activities both online (during the period when the pandemic related protocols were in force), and offline during Holi and Diwali celebrations.

A new beginning was made by the IAAOWA towards attaining a pan-Indian character and reaching out to all the members and families of the IA&AS fraternity across the country. We seek your support, active participation and voluntary help in fulfilling the aspirations of your IAAOWA to transform it into a strong socio-cultural association and serve the interests of the families of IA&AS fraternity and the society at large.

We are grateful for the tremendous support, appreciation and encouragement received from the members for the first edition of our magazine Abhikya. The focus of the current edition is Yarrows, the home away from home for every IA&AS officer. Nestled in the sylvan surroundings of Shimla, Yarrows is not a hostel building made of bricks, slate or wood, but an experience, the memory of which brings elation and misty eyes to generations of IA&AS Officers. We give you a peek into our past through these pages.

Happy reading!

From the Editor's Desk

Dear IA&AS Family, we hope you all enjoyed the inaugural edition of Abhikya! We had then asked everyone to share their memories of the place that began this journey of becoming a part of the Indian Audit & Accounts family - Yarrows!

In this edition of Abhikya, we have had such wonderful pictures and drawings shared that we almost have a coffee book on Yarrows ready! Poems and prose by spouses, children and the officers are surely going to take you down that path again... We continue bringing you talents of poetry, story telling, art and photography! We have couplets in Hindi and English poems for the soul; we also have for you stories by our very creative young minds. As temperatures drop particularly in north India, we also have tips for self-care!

Abhikya's January edition also brings you a glimpse of IAAOWA activities during the second half of 2021. Apart from a glimpse into the inauguration of the magazine, Abhikya shares the joy we women had twirling to the musical tones on Garba night, the annual Diwali celebration and a donation drive. We have tried to be true to the meaning of Abhikya - beautiful woman in Sanskrit; and this is yet another attempt by IAAOWA, to celebrate the beauty inside each one of its readers... especially as a tribute to women - lady officers or officers' wives, who have the beauty to gracefully manage every aspect of their lives; and kindle the spirit of creativity to go with it!

As a team, we are grateful to the contributors for their overwhelming response towards our second edition. We are also grateful to our Patron Dr Smita Murmu and President Ms Alpana Prasad for their constant support and encouragement, without whom, this magazine would have remained a dream. But as rung in this year, Abhikya had to say goodbye to Ms. Alpana Prasad, who had been such a wonderful support as the IAAOWA President. We couldn't have done this without ma'am! Abhikya and IAAOWA wish her only the very best in all her forward journeys!

We would also like to welcome Ms Vani Sriram as the new President of IAAOWA and we are excited on what the future may hold working under ma'am's guidance.

Dear readers, do have a look at what's coming up in our next edition! We also welcome any comments to the editions through the feedback form link towards the end of the magazine. We look forward to you sharing your musings and talents with us again. We also hope that you enjoy reading this edition as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you! Happy Reading and a very Happy New Year!!

With the Warmest Regards,

Ms. Jeethu Elza Cherian
Editor

Dr. Astha Giri (PhD)
Assistant Editor

Dr. Arpita Desai
Consulting Editor

Editorial Team

Professionally, Jeethu is a political communications and public policy analyst. With a Masters in International Relations from London Metropolitan University (UK), she has worked in varying capacities for the BBC, UNICEF and the US Embassy in India. She is currently working as the Research Officer with the Department of Defence, at the Australian High Commission New Delhi. She is a full-time nerd with a love for country music, contemporary dancing and good food! She is the spouse of Mr. Deepak Mathews (Batch 2009).



Editor - Ms. Jeethu Elza Cherian

Professionally, Dr. Astha Giri is an assistant professor of Biochemistry at the Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi. With a Ph. D degree in Microbiology from the University of Delhi, she has worked extensively on drug resistant tuberculosis (TB) and its implications on the Indian population. She enjoys travelling and dancing; and is passionate about painting! She is the spouse of Mr. Mrinal Chawla (Batch 2014).



Assistant Editor - Dr. Astha Giri (PhD)

Dr Arpita Desai is a Dermatologist, Cosmetologist and Trichologist from Mumbai with an experience of 14 years in this discipline. She is a member of various associations like Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists (IADVL), Cosmetic Dermatology Society of India (CSI), and Association of Cutaneous Surgeons of India (ACSI) in her field. For her skills and dedication, the Kaya Skin Clinic presented her with the 'Business Excellence and Customer First' Award. She is also the Joint Secretary of IAAOWA. She loves travelling, music and good food; and has an awesome sense of humour! She is the spouse of Dr Vishal Desai (Batch 2010).



Consulting Editor - Dr Arpita Desai



IAAOWA
Activities

Launching Abhikhya...

Dear IA&AS family, you might remember the invitation for contributing to a magazine of IAAOWA... the idea of a magazine was not new, and yet in some ways it was... You see, we had realised as the pandemic hit, that we needed to do something to bring the IAAOWA family even closer - not just those who are posted at New Delhi, but also our families spread across the country and abroad - and that's how the idea of *Abhikhya*, IAAOWA's magazine was born. *Abhikhya* means a beautiful woman in Sanskrit; it was, and still is, an attempt by IAAOWA, to celebrate the beauty inside each one of its readers... especially as a tribute to women - lady officers or officers' wives, who have the beauty to gracefully manage every aspect of their lives; and kindle the spirit of creativity to go with it!

Under the able guidance of our Patron, Dr Smita Murmu Ma'am and our then president Ms Alpana Prasad, with the utmost support of our Secretary, Ms. Swati Singh, and of course, with the wonderful contributions from the IAAOWA family, *Abhikhya* slowly came to be...

Just as any ship needs a bon voyage, *Abhikhya* was formally launched by our Patron on 7th September 2021. While *Abhikhya* will be an e-magazine, a few hard copies were printed and distributed at the launch. We look forward to sharing many more editions with you... *Abhikhya*, onward journey she goes...





Garba Night

In a country as culturally diverse and rich as India, you can be sure that some festival is being celebrated at some part of the country, at any time of the year!

This year, IAAOWA thought about celebrating a festival that is hugely celebrated in Gujarat - Garba! Garba is a dance that honours, worships, and celebrates the feminine form of divinity - in tune with what Abhikhya is - celebrating the feminine in us!

So, on 9th October 2021, IAAOWA members gathered at the lawns of our Patron's residence and twirled away into the night! And the huge, delicious spread of food was just an added bonus that made everyone smile... We hope you do too... We leave you here, *with Glimpses of the Gorgeouses from Garba night...*





Diwali Celebration

Come every year, just before the harsh winter sets in, Delhi gets ready to celebrate Diwali - a celebration of the triumph of good over evil. The festival of lights also marks the victory of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance.

Last year, Diwali celebrations, conducted by IAAOWA under the aegis of Dr Smita Murmu was held on 16th October. Given that the government had started easing restrictions, and with everyone, post the second wave of COVID, slowly limping back to normalcy (or whatever the new normal is), this was a welcome night for all. IAAOWA organised a Diwali event with lights, music, surprise gifts and lots of delicious food; and how could we forget the delightful performances by our dearest children and other talented IAAOWA family members? They shared their talents through music and poetry...

We leave you with pictures from Diwali 2021...





Donation Drive

*“Giving is not just about making a donation,
It is about making a difference”....*

Holding true to these words of Kathy Calvin, the former CEO of the United Nations Foundation, IAAOWA continues its donation drives. This time, IAAOWA coordinated a drive on 30 October 2021, at a Rain Basera at New Delhi.

Rain Basera are shelter homes for the homeless, established by the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), a nodal organisation for the operation and management of Night Shelters in the city. The DUSIB has 198 night shelters which are run by various NGOs. These provide basic necessities like durries, blankets, covered and enclosed shelter spaces, water, toilets and electricity on deposition of Aadhaar cards or after producing an out-patient department slips. For IAAOWA's donation drive clothes, shawls, blankets, sweaters were distributed to around 100 children in the age group 5-18 years and to about a 100 residents at an old age home.

If you would like to be a part of our next donation drive, please do get in touch with Ms. Swati Singh, Secretary, IAAOWA. You can donate as well as volunteer for the drive. We leave it to you... A glimpse from the day...





KidSpace

Creativity from the little hands

Rishu and the Toys World



Harsh Kartikeya Mishra
(6 yrs)

Once upon a time there was a boy whose name was Rishu. One day he was playing in a jungle and he saw a big hole in a tree trunk. He went near the hole to see it. He went near the hole and put his hand into it. The hole suddenly pulled Rishu in. Rishu started sliding inside the tree trunk. Then he reached a new world where there were toys all around. He shouted, “Wow, this is TOYS WORLD.” He was very very happy. He ran around in the new world. He started plucking toys swinging on trees. Then he saw a toy house. He went inside the toy house. He started playing with toys in that house. After he was tired, he took some toys from there. He took the way from the tree trunk and went back to his home. When his mother saw new toys with him, she asked, “Where did you get these toys from?” Rishu smiled as this was his new secret.

The Princess and the Rabbit



Harshika Keerti Mishra
(6 yrs)

Once upon a time there was a King who had five daughters. These five princesses were all very beautiful. One day, they went to a park to play. The youngest princess, Pinky, was playing in one corner of the park where there was a muddy puddle. She suddenly fell into the puddle. She started crying. But she was away from her sisters so no one heard her cry. One rabbit was sitting in the bushes near the puddle. Rabbit saw the princess crying. He went to her. He saw her wound and her dirty dress. He ran back to his Mummy Rabbit and brought medicines and a new dress for the princess. Princess Pinky was very happy to see the rabbit. But she saw that the rabbit was very sad. She asked, "Why are you so sad?" The rabbit said, "I don't have any friends so I feel sad". Princess quickly said, "Why don't you make me and my sisters your friends?" Rabbit was very happy to make five new friends. Then the princess and the rabbit became best friends.

The Clever Policeman and The Thief



Saumya Singh
(8 yrs)

Once upon a time, there lived a clever policeman named Mr. Fox. The policeman had solved many cases. After a few days, there were many cases of robbery by a particular thief. Mr. Fox was given this case. As he was unable to catch the thief, he got an idea. He went to a cloth shop and bought very expensive clothes. He wore them. He knew where the thief was, so he went there and waited for the thief to come out. When the thief came out, Mr. Fox pretended as if he was waiting for someone. The thief said to him “can I help you?” Mr. Fox said “yes, I am waiting for my ride. Can you give me a lift to my destination?” The thief replied “okay, but I will charge something in return”. Mr. Fox said “sure!” Mr. Fox asked him to stop the car in front of the police station. The thief reached the police station and said give me something. Mr. Fox asked the thief to come inside to collect his payment. The thief came inside. Now, Mr. Fox said “arrest him!” The thief got arrested.

Inner Peace



**Hemal Kumar Mathur,
(15 yrs)**

The serene water,
Blue, so deep
Forests whisper,
Birds twitter
Within our inner peace...

O, I'm here,
In the middle of clutter
Winding roads,
Sultry summer
Surrounded by dark,
Dust and smoke

No respite,
No reprieve
Yet another day
Full of toxins and blight
No end to plight

Where to go?
How to escape?
By dipping into
My inner peace!!!

The Pandemic Year



AASHVI PARIKH
(9 yrs)

(How craft helped me sail through all these months of lockdowns and uncertainty....!)

APRIL

Since I missed my friends the most, the first thought that came to my mind was to do something special for them. And that reminded me of making the birthday caterpillar, to remember all of my dear friends' birthdays, with each circle for every month of celebration.



MAY

Since I was getting bored, I decided to make a bed for my new, favourite doll. But how funny of me to have forgotten that I actually had two favourite dolls, so I had to finally make a bunk bed! And now my dolls are happy, safe and comfortable in their cosy beds.



JUNE

Since my mother did not buy me a toy that month, I thought I should make some straw puppets of my favourite cartoon characters to cheer me up. Soon I had made some "My Little Pony" and "PJ Masks" buddies to give me company and now I play with them often, making up stories and enacting with them.



JULY

Since I was reading all my books and finishing them very fast, I thought of writing one myself, but not on the computer! This time I decided to rather write on paper itself, inspired by my most loved TV shows. And voila! Now I have my very own collection of small, self-written books to enjoy.



AUGUST

Since my mother planned an online party for Janmashtmi, I decided to prepare a dance and make a pot full of butter.....oh no, I am just kidding about the second thing!! My mother gave me a pot and it was so much fun decorating it, while I used cotton to fill it up for Krishna, instead of butter, of course!



SEPTEMBER

Since my mother and grandmother had a temple of their own, I thought of making my own temple also, so I took printouts, coloured them and made 'prasad' out of clay. My mother gave me a small toy sofa where my Gods are happily seated and now I see them day and night!!

OCTOBER

Since my friend's mother had planned a Halloween party and told us to make our own costumes, I made some shiny fairy wings out of paper and had planned to use my yellow dress for a fairy gown. I made a wand too, but the Halloween party could not happen and the wings are still here in my room!



NOVEMBER

Since Diwali was near, I decided not just to make a rangoli but some diyas too. I mean I wouldn't make diyas, I'll just colour them. So I sat down with some paints and old rakhis and now I have beautiful home-decorated diyas all around the house as a memory of that Diwali.

DECEMBER

Since my friend's mother had held a X-mas tree decoration activity, so with all of my family's help, I made small presents and treats out of newspaper and covered them in gift paper. Though it was hard work, we had a lot of fun because it became a family activity where we all enjoyed together.



JANUARY

Ever since the Green Ranger Club had been started, we had done many fun activities and then my mother said we had to make a wall hanging, from dry leaves, dry flowers and sticks. So I made it using all the stuff we could gather outdoors. It was hard because first we took a lot of time to find proper things around us and then I had to make them look attractive to become a proper wall-hanging!



FEBRUARY

Since I was really getting bored, I told my mother and she said, 'Hmm, how about you make a lamp for me?' 'Wow!' I said and then checked on Youtube. Finally after a lot of effort, patience and time, I could make a golden paper lamp and when it lit our room... I felt so happy and proud!



MARCH

Since my mother's friend had shared one video with her on how to make a doll house for me, so I thought, 'Let's make it!' but it took like ten or eleven months (like a real house almost!). It was hard but I enjoyed making all the small-small things in it and decorating the doll house.



Health and Wellness



WINTER SKIN CARE TIPS



Dr. Arptia Desai

Dr Arpita is a Dermatologist, Cosmetologist and Trichologist from Mumbai with an experience of 14 years in this discipline.

This winter must have been tough for many of us; apart from the lowest temperatures that Delhi had seen in a long time, COVID just added to all of us being indoors mostly. But that does not mean we stop taking care of ourselves. You see, as the temperature goes down, our skin loses moisture and natural oils and becomes rough with loss of smooth texture. So, here are a few tips to help restore your skin...

1. Is it fine to use Body Lotion over Face?

Our never ending need for hybrid skin-care products tempts us to have a one-for-all and all-for-one kind of skin moisturizer. But the skin over our body is usually a lot thicker than our Face. Hence, we need thicker or greasier lotions and creams for better penetration and long lasting effects over our body.

But in comparison, our face has many more oil glands. So, using a body lotion or cream would not only make your face oily, but it would also mean more chances of pore clogging leading to acne, milia, miliaria etc. especially in acne prone skin.

Moreover, body lotions are generally fragrance rich which may not suit the sensitive skin of the face. So always check the label to make sure the product is specifically formulated for both face and body.

2. Remember to Hydrate Internally

Water is a natural detoxifier as well as it is the main chemical component, but most of us are unaware about how much water we should ideally drink every day. The most popular "8 by 8 Water Rule" says that one should drink 8 glasses, each consisting of 8 ounces (240ml) or 1 glass of water.

This rule however may not be applicable to every person. It is more beneficial to drink water according to your lifestyle. For example, for a predominantly sedentary or air conditioned lifestyle an intake of 2-3 liters of water per day would be enough. Whereas a moderately active person would need a minimum three liters daily.

One must consume a proper portion of your consumption (~800ml) early mornings after waking up for a better gut as well as to keep your body fit. Water intake should be kept in mind in winters too even if we don't feel thirsty. Exceptions to this are people who are diabetic, hypertensive or have kidney disorder, etc. They must consult their physician regarding water requirements.

3. Use Mild Soap/Hand wash

It is true that by using soap or hand wash you can remove dirt and sweat from your body and make your skin clean and fresh. But sometimes your skin might not agree with the type of soap you use to wash your skin. Soap and hand sanitizers are harsh on skin as they can steal moisture from the skin and make it itchy and reddish.

Body washes are a better option than soaps as they are more moisturizing. In fact, the more soap you use the more you are drying out your skin. Additionally, stick to fragrance free cleansers, if you have to use soap opt for organic and natural ones.

A mild soap or hand wash has a soothing effect on skin and avoids washing off of the natural moisture and eases the inflammation. Hence, opting for a mild soap or hand wash can lessen skin irritation and reduce redness.

4. Apply Non-Fragrant Moisturizer liberally and frequently

A lotion or moisturizer can be chosen depending on what skin type you have. Having dry skin or oily skin does not matter! Fragrance-free lotion or moisturizer is the one which has no fragrance and is suitable for all skin types.

5. Prefer Quick Showers with Lukewarm Water

Prefer lukewarm water over hot water for shower! Limit your shower time to a maximum of 10 minutes. The quicker the shower, the less dry the skin will be. Keep the shower temperature to medium as hot showers may strip your body of essential moisture. Lukewarm water gives relaxation to your muscles and relieves congestion too.

If someone has trouble sleeping at night, then shower with lukewarm water helps to sleep peacefully. It is also said that bathing with lukewarm water can lessen the risk of heart diseases. Having shower with lukewarm water reduces menstrual cramps and migraine headaches too!!

6. Apply Moisturizer Immediately Post-Bath

It is a must to apply lotion or moisturizer throughout the year to keep your skin soft and hydrated. Applying a moisturizer just after bathing is quite more effective as at that moment the skin is completely saturated.

But, the trick is to know the perfect balance between how wet the skin must be and how much you must lock in the lotion. It is advised to apply lotion within the first five minutes after your shower so that body's natural moisture also gets locked in.

All you need to do is pat your skin dry with the towel and immediately apply a lotion or moisturizer. Avoid rubbing your skin with the towel.

7. Don't Forget your Sunscreen

Apply sunscreen every time you step out. Your skin needs protection from the Sun even when the weather is foggy.

In short, in winters, focus on keeping skin hydrated, protected from elements, and insulated from irritation...



Musings

Reflections, thoughts, opinions
and much more.....

Life on The Other Side of Big 4 '0'

As I bid a teary farewell to my thirties and tentatively step into my 40's, I am apprehensive and kept anticipating a melt down on my part; but astonishingly, I am quite indifferent. After all, age is just a number, you are as old as you feel; and I do want to believe in the notion that 40 is the new thirty, though, it will sound much better if they replace thirty by twenty.

But anyways, I am wondering what has changed as I cross 39, apart from the inability to read fine prints without removing my glasses, or creating a 100 meter distance between the eyes and the prints, or the loss of agility, and the fact that when someone says middle-aged, s/he actually is referring to me. What new things have happened which were absent in my 20s and 30s.

The innumerable physiological changes start to show their effect. The first signs of aging make their debut. My night stand resembles a shelf of a drug store with all the possible creams for all the fine lines which have already appeared or are way too eager to make their appearance. Metabolism is slow. I just gained a fold on my tummy while writing this. But not all is downhill from here, at least figuratively. My kids feel that 40 is a big number. My mom feels that this is my prime age. Google, my all time referral point, uses words like middle-aged, premenopausal, for the young women like me, which definitely should be shunned from the dictionary.

But what does a forty-year old think about being 40. Well, let's see. Forty means being comfortable in my loose skin. I don't crave for external validation now. I am comfortable with my choices. Anxiety generating stressful stages in career and personal life are gone. The coping mechanism is all in place and is working. Now, this feeling of comfort has totally spoiled me. I look for comfort in each and every aspect which means goodbye stiletto and contact lenses. I choose comfort over style, way too often (read more often than not I resemble a homeless person). Marriage is rock solid than ever only because after 16 years of marriage we have finally discovered the speed of fan and temperature of AC, at which both of us are comfortable. Using separate restrooms has also strengthened our marriage. So, in a nutshell, hubby is more or less trained. He no longer forgets my birthday, he knows the difference between dirty and clean clothes etc. etc. Years of labour have finally started bearing fruit.

Kids, yes, that aspect continues to be tricky. They are growing fast, asserting their independence but still dependent on me for silly things. And I have started depending on them more and more for the technological glitches which life offers and for keeping myself updated with what's trending. And we do continue to fight like siblings. By this time, life has seen so much drama, emotion and romance that a blockbuster can be made out of it. I am not advising you to do so. It's just that I realise the importance of the ordinary. There is no wait for something momentous to happen, the significance of insignificant is known.

I appreciate what I have, my mundane life seems enthralling to me. I am more confident now. I know my vulnerabilities more than ever but I have also learnt to be strong in it. I know that I can't please everyone but I can be kind to everyone. I am no longer squeamish about taboo subjects. I have realized that super mom is the biggest myth, most probably created by aliens, to slowly annihilate us by the sheer pressure of obtaining the unattainable. Teens was all about being weird, twenties was the age of idealism. In thirty I was busy striking a balance between ideal and real. Hopefully, 40 is as surreal as I think it is.

Passing time has not only aged me, it has made me more grateful, appreciative, confident, accepting and efficient. With time, not only the lines on my face have deepened but my relationships with my loved ones, especially with myself, have also deepened. Each grey hair has its own story to tell. I look back at my life and realize that nothing went as planned, but everything that happened made me stronger. So friends, enjoy your forties as the next milestone is fifty. And till now no one has said that 50 is the new twenty five.

Anonymous

Classes Throughout the Year...



Adithya Kili
Fifth semester
BALLB UPES, Dehradun.

Cold winds and snow white roofs,
With foggy breaths and goosebumps,
Blankets holding us in their warm embrace,
Tempting and tiring us away,
But there's always class to attend.

Thick coats and treasured woollens,
As we wait for the floral summers,
For roses and rhododendrons,
For cold drinks and ice creams,
But there's still class to attend.

हिन्दी साहित्य में प्रकृति चित्रण



श्री अनुपम कुलश्रेष्ठ
(आई ए & ए एस, 1975, से. नि.)

प्रकृति है तो मनुष्य है, प्रकृति और मनुष्य का संबंध उतना ही पुराना है जितनी कि यह सृष्टि है। सृष्टि के प्रारम्भ में आदिमानव की सहचरी प्रकृति ही थी, प्रकृति के बिना जीवन की कल्पना ही संभव नहीं थी। हमारे प्राचीन ग्रंथों में जिन पांच तत्वों की व्याख्या की गयी है, जिन पांच तत्वों से सृष्टि की उत्पत्ति और विकास माना गया है, वह पाँच तत्व (पृथ्वी, जल, वायु, अग्नि, और आकाश) अपने मूल स्वरूप में प्रकृति के ही अंग हैं। वैदिक काल में तो चन्द्रमा, सूर्य, उषा, संध्या, नदी, वृक्ष, पर्वत आदि प्रकृति के विविध अंग-रूपों को देवत्व प्रदान किया गया था।

प्रकृति में सुन्दरता है और मनुष्य सुन्दरता का प्रेमी है। अतः साहित्य प्रकृति से अछूता नहीं रह सकता है। संस्कृत साहित्य में कालिदास का 'मेघदूत' और बाणभट्ट की 'कादंबरी' प्रकृति-चित्रण से संबंधित बेजोड़ ग्रन्थ हैं। हिन्दी साहित्य में भी आरम्भ से ही प्रकृति चित्रण के अनेक रूप मिलते हैं। कहीं कवियों ने प्रकृति को उद्दीपन (Stimulus) के रूप में देखा है, तो कहीं आलम्बन में प्रकृति का सहारा ले कर अपनी बात कही है। मुझे अपने बचपन में पढ़ी कविता अब तक याद है

सूरज निकला, चिड़िया बोली, कलियों ने भी आँखें खोलीं,
आसमान में छाई लाली, हवा बही सुख देने वाली,
नन्हीं नन्हीं किरणें आईं, फूल हँसे, कलियाँ मुस्काईं।
ऐसा सुन्दर समय न खोओ, मेरे प्यारे अब मत सोओ

आधुनिक काल में छायावाद के चलते प्रकृति का मानवीकरण रूप अनेक रचनाओं में दिखता है। पन्त जी की 'पतझड़' तथा 'ज्योत्स्ना' और प्रसाद जी की 'कामायनी' तथा 'झरना' इसके उत्तम नमूने हैं। मानवीकरण!

पगली, हाँ सम्हाल ले तेरा, छूट पड़ा कैसे अंचल।

देख बिखरती मणिराजी, अरी उठा ओ बेसुध चंचल - कामायनी से

भक्तिकाल व रीतिकाल के कृष्ण भक्त कवियों ने कृष्ण तथा गोपियों के संयोग तथा वियोग के उद्दीपन के रूप में प्रकृति का वर्णन किया है। वियोग की दशा में प्रकृति के समस्त उपकरण वियोगमग्न गोपी के ताप को बढ़ाने वाले हैं। फूलों के वन में फूलने से, भौरों के गुंजारने से, बंसत में कोकिल की किलकार सुनकर सबके कंत विदेश से लौट आते हैं वे अपने प्रिय से आग्रह करती हैं कि तुम इतने कठोर क्यों हो गये कि मेरी पीर का तुम्हें अनुभव नहीं होता। कोकिल की कूक सुनकर वियोग-ताप और बढ़ जाता है। हृदय विचलित होने लगता है – रसखान कहते हैं

फूलत फूल सबै बन बागन बोलत भौर बसंत के आवत।

कोयल की किलकार सुनै सब कंत विदेसन ते धावत॥

ऐसे कठोर महा रसखान जू नैकहू मोरी ये पीर न पावत।

हूक सी सालत है हिय में जब बैरिन कोयल कूक सुनावत॥

प्रकृति को मनुष्य के सुख-दुख की सहभागिनी बना जायसी की रानी नागमती की विरह-दशा से पीड़ित होकर कवि का कहना - 'आधी रात पपीहा बोला' और सीता-हरण के बाद श्रीराम का विलाप करना: 'हे खग-मृग है मधुकर श्रेणी। तुम देखी सीता मृगनैनी।' इतना ही नहीं, उमड़ घुमड़कर आते बादलों को देख श्रीराम लक्ष्मण से कह उठते हैं: 'घन घमंड गरजत नभ घोरा। प्रियाहीन मन डरपत मोरा।'

तुलसीदास रामचरित मानस में सामंजस्य पर आधारित समवेती विकास (sustainable डेवलपमेंट) की बात करते हैं। उन्होंने प्राकृतिक संसाधनों को मात्र उपभोग की वस्तु न मान कर सभी जीवों तथा वनस्पतियों से प्रेम का सम्बन्ध स्थापित किया है। इन संसाधनों का उपभोग मना है, ऐसा न कहकर इनका उपभोग आवश्यकतानुसार और कृतज्ञतापूर्वक करने की बात कही गयी है, जैसे कि वृक्ष से फल तोड़कर खाना तो उचित है लेकिन वृक्ष को काटना अपराध है जो कि आज Intergenerational Equity और Intragenerational Equity के नाम से जाना जाता है -

रीझि-खीझी गुरुदेव सिष सखा सुसाहित साधु।

तोरि खाहु फल होई भलु तरु काटे अपराधू

वृक्षारोपण पर्यावरण प्रदूषण से मुक्ति पाने का एक अत्यंत प्रभावी उपाय है। श्रीरामचन्द्र जी के विवाहोपरान्त बारात लौटकर अयोध्या आती है तो अयोध्या नगरी में विविध पौधों का रोपण किया जाता है-

सफल पूगफल कदलि रसाला, रोपे बकुल कदम्ब तमाला

श्रीराम अपने वन-प्रवास के दिनों में सीता जी व लक्ष्मण जी के साथ विस्तृत पौधारोपण की योजना बनाते हैं और सीता जी एवम् लक्ष्मण जी पौधे लगाते हैं -

तुलसी तरुवर विविध सुहाय, कहुँ कहुँ सिँ, कहुँ लखन लगाये

तुलसीदास जी की रामराज्य की कल्पना में प्रकृति में अनोखा सामन्जस्य है

फूलहिं फरहिं सदा तरु कानन, रहहि एक संग गज पंचानन

खग मृग सहज बयरु बिसराई, सबन्हिं परस्पर प्रीति बढ़ाई

कूजहिं खग मृग नाना वृंदा, अभय चरहिं बन करहिं अनंदा

सीतल सुरभि पवन बह मंदा, गुंजत अलि लै चलि मकरंदा

मध्यकालीन कवियों में, बिहारी, केशव और सेनापति की रचनाओं में भरपूर प्रकृति चित्रण है। आधुनिक काल में आकर छायावादी कवियों ने तो प्रकृति का मनुष्य का ही रूप दे दिया। छायावाद के चार प्रमुख स्तम्भ – जयशंकर प्रसाद, सुमित्रानंदन पन्त, महादेवी वर्मा और सूर्यकांत त्रिपाठी निराला – इन सब की कवितायें प्रकृति प्रेम से भरपूर हैं।

पंत जी ने तो प्रकृति के सौन्दर्य को नारी के आकर्षण से भी ऊपर माना है -

छोड़ दुमों की मृदु छाया, तोड़ प्रकृति से भी माया,

बाले! तेरे बाल-जाल में कैसे उलझा दूँ लोचन?

भूल अभी से इस जग को!

‘प्रकृति के सुकुमार कवि’ नाम से जाने वाले पंत जी प्रकृति की गोद में पले, प्रकृति से मित्रता की और उसके उपासक भी रहे। इनकी कविताओं में प्रकृति को अनेक रूपों में दिखाया गया है – कभी मस्त, कभी संतप्त, कभी प्रफुल्लित और कभी उल्लास एवं अनुरागपूर्ण। मधुपकुमारियों का मधुकर गान सुन मुग्ध हो कर वे कह देते हैं - सिखा दो ना हे मधुप कुमारि, मुझे भी अपने मीठे गान।

” नौका विहार “ नामक कविता में गंगा की शांत धारा का एक लेटी हुई शान्त क्लान्त बाला के रूप में सुन्दर वर्णन-

सैकत-शय्या पर दुग्ध-धवल, तन्वंगी गंगा, ग्रीष्म-विरल, लेटी हैं श्रान्त, क्लान्त, निश्चल!
तापस-बाला गंगा, निर्मल, शशि-मुख से दीपित मृदु-करतल, लहरे उर पर कोमल कुंतल।
गोरे अंगों पर सिहर-सिहर, लहराता तार-तरल सुन्दर चंचल अंचल-सा नीलांबर!
साड़ी की सिकुड़न-सी जिस पर, शशि की रेशमी-विभा से भर, सिमटी हैं वर्तुल, मृदुल लहर।

सूखे हुए वृक्ष पर कली खिली है, मुस्कुराती है। वह हमें उपदेश देती है कि दुःख को भी हँसकर सहन करना चाहिये। हम प्रयत्न करने पर भी इसका पालन नहीं कर पाते हैं।

वन की सूखी डाली पर, सीखा कली ने मुस्काना।

में सीख न पाया अब तक, सुख से दुःख को अपनाना

जयशंकर प्रसाद जी ने प्रकृति चित्रण आलम्बन रूप में भी किया है और प्रकृति का मानवीकरण करके भी अनेक कवितायें रची हैं। प्रसाद जी द्वारा उषा के मानवीकरण से तो हम सब परिचित ही हैं। देखिए—

बीती विभावरी जाग री,

अम्बर पनघट में डुबा रही तारा घट उषा नागरी।

खग-कुल, कुल-कुल सा बोल रहा, किसलय का अंचल डोल रहा,

लो यह लतिका भी भर लाई, मधु मुकुल नवल रस गागरी

प्रसाद जी ने प्रकृति को परमात्मा से अलग नहीं देखा, अतः उनकी कविताओं में दर्शन की झलक भी मिलती है। प्रकृति के हृदय को विकसित करने की स्वाभाविक शक्ति के विषय में प्रसाद जी कहते हैं –

नील नीरद देखकर आकाश में, क्यों खड़ा चातक रहा किस आस में।

क्यों चकोरी को हुआ उल्लास है, क्या कलानिधि का अपूर्व विकास है

पिछली सदी के पूर्वार्ध में भी प्रसाद जी को इस पृथ्वी पर कोलाहल (noise pollution) मालूम पड़ता था
अतः उनकी कल्पना एक ऐसे निर्जन में जाने की थी जहाँ

ले चल मुझे भुलावा देकर, मेरे नाविक! धीरे-धीरे!
जिस निर्जन में सागर लहरी अम्बर के कानों में गहरी
निश्छल प्रेम-कथा कहती हो, तज कोलाहल की अवनी रे!

उनका महाकाव्य 'कामायनी' तो प्रकृति चित्रण का भण्डार है।
हिमगिरि के उत्तुंग शिखर पर, बैठ शिला की शीतल छाँह
एक पुरुष, भीगे नयनों से देख रहा था प्रलय प्रवाह
नीचे जल था ऊपर हिम था, एक तरल था एक सघन,
एक तत्व की ही प्रधानता कहो उसे जड़ या चेतन

दूर दूर तक विस्तृत था हिम, स्तब्ध उसी के हृदय समान,
नीरवता-सी शिला-चरण से टकराता फिरता पवमान

हरिऔध जी का उनके खंडकाव्य 'प्रिय प्रवास' के आरम्भ में किया संध्या का वर्णन देखिये-

दिवस का अवसान समीप था, गगन था कुछ लोहित हो चला,
तरु शिखा पर थी अब राजती, कमलिनी कुल वल्लभ की प्रभा ।

हिन्दी कविता का ब्रह्माण्ड तो अनंत है, उसे कुछ एक पन्नों में समाया नहीं जा सकता। निराला जी ने अपनी रचनाओं 'संध्या सुन्दरी', 'शरद पूर्णिमा की विदाई', 'जुही की कली' में बेजोड़ प्रकृति चित्रण किया है। महादेवी वर्मा, रामनरेश त्रिपाठी, मैथिलीशरण गुप्त, दिनकर जी और अन्य कई कवियों के वर्णन के बिना यह लेख अधूरा ही रहेगा.

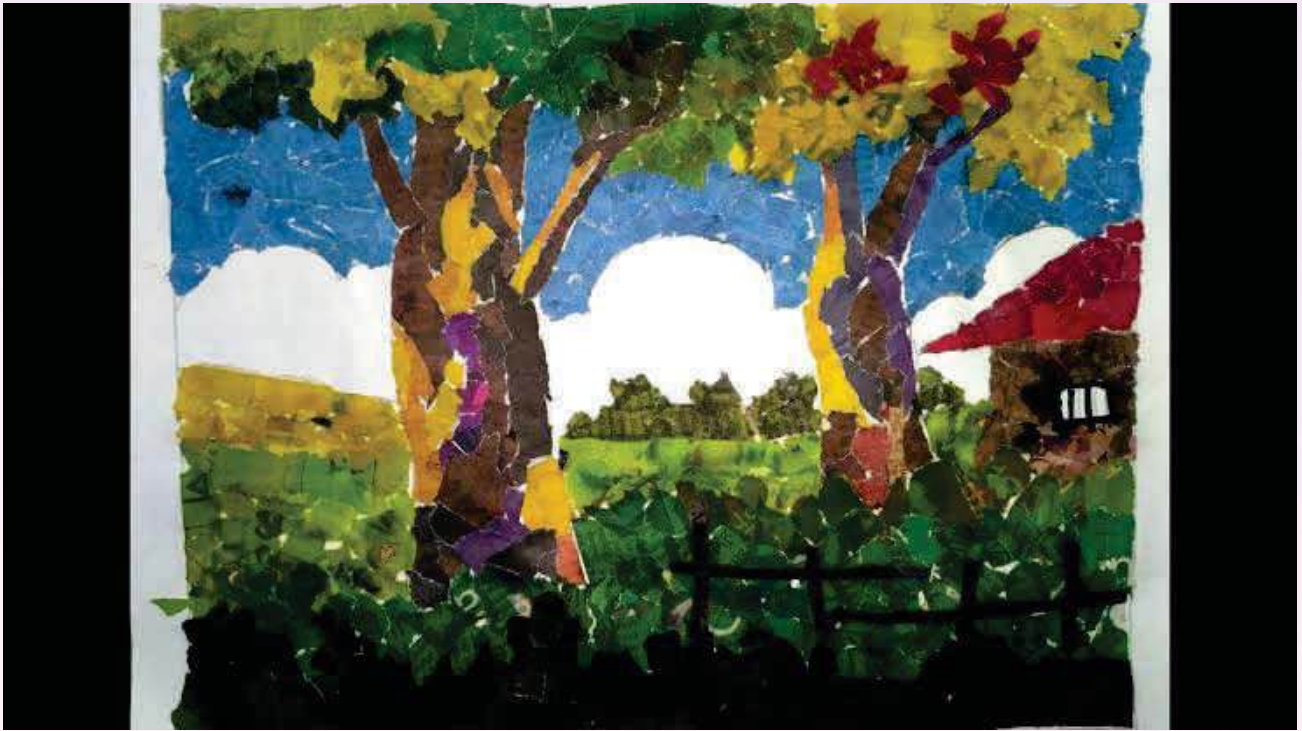
अंत में प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य का आनंद लेना है तो हृदय में भी भावुकता चाहिए -

'बना लो, अपना हृदय प्रशान्त, तनिक तब देखो वह सौन्दर्य' – जयशंकर प्रसाद



Talent Corner

Creative corner for the art enthusiasts



**Master Aaditya Ishbaque
Dungdung
(9 Yrs)**



**Master Riyansh Jha
(6 Yrs)**



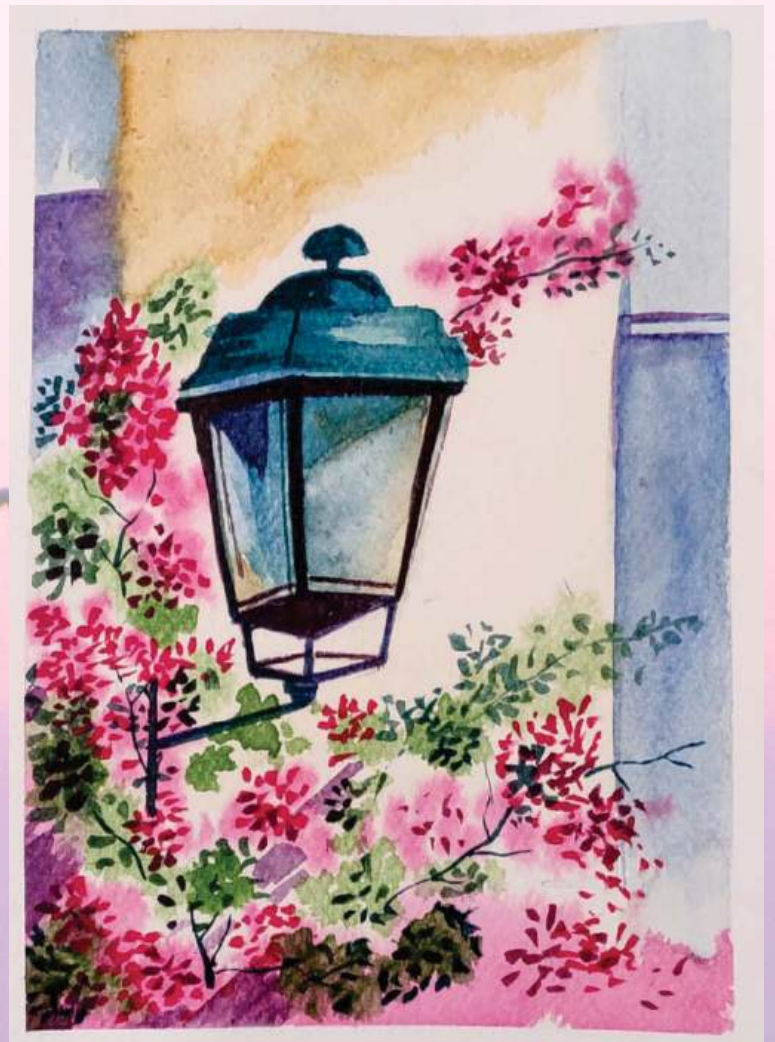
If you
change the
way YOU
look at things
the things YOU
look at change



Ms. Aahna Jha
(13 Yrs)



Ms. Varsha Shankaran



Ms. Astha Giri



monochrome water droplets



sandclock



Ms. Saakshi

YARROWS

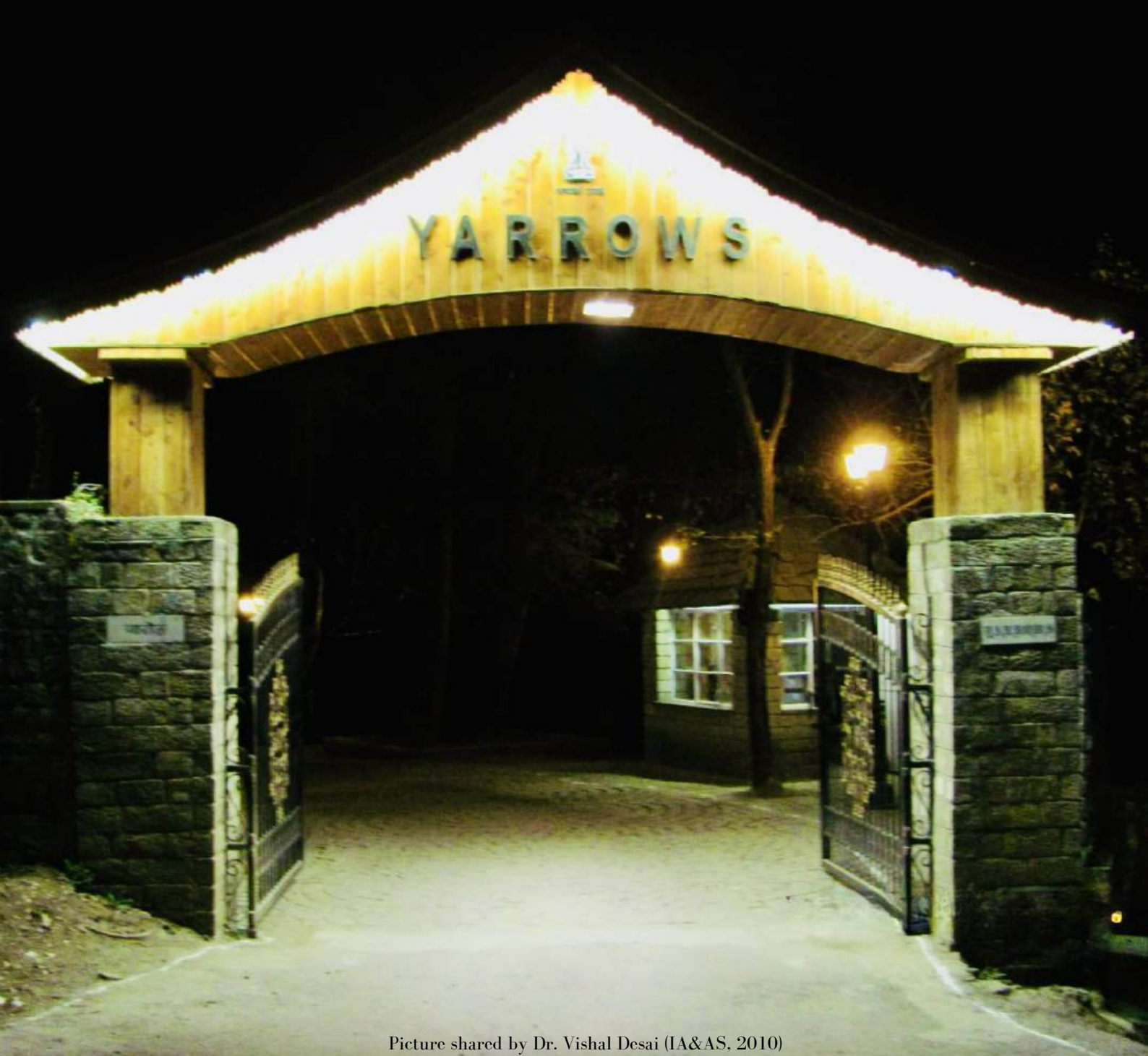
The Beginning of Endless
Memories



We don't have to physically glimpse Yarrows for nostalgia to flood back, the mere thought of Yarrows is more often than not, sufficient. But when we do make a visit and see her again, we often experience a déjà vu moment because over the years it has remained largely unchanged, and met us every time, "with unaltered face, though we were changed and changing". It was almost as if 'a plodding, indefatigable and distant past had crashed intact through the barriers of time in to its own future'. That is the magic of Yarrows, the fact that time has taken its toll of us, but left it untouched.

*(Extract from the Prelude to 'Remembrance of Things Past - Yarrows Revisited'
by
Late Shri SB Pillay, the then Director General, NAAA in December 2009)*





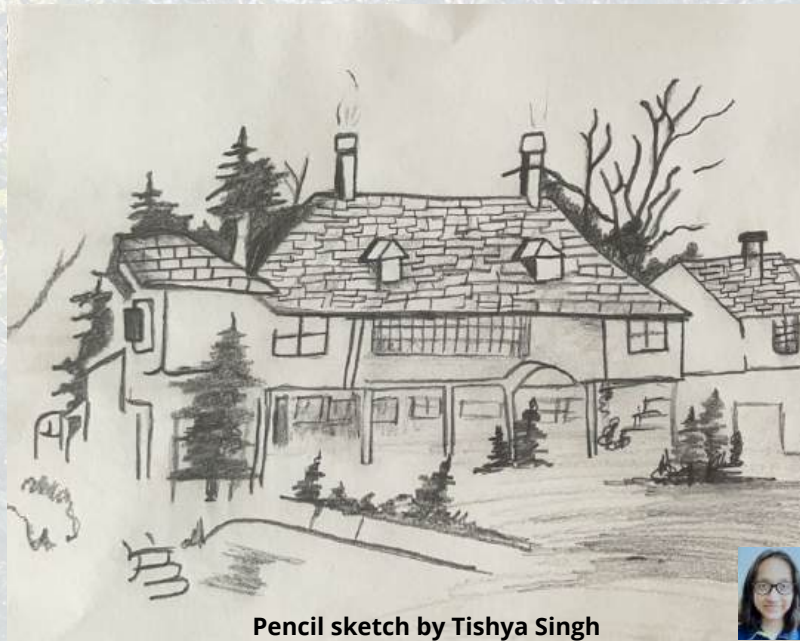
Picture shared by Dr. Vishal Desai (IA&AS, 2010)



Yarrow's... A Home Away from Home

Let's go down the memory lane

Lets



Pencil sketch by Tishya Singh

YARROWS - Where Memories Collide

- Ms. Bhavika Joshi Lathe (IA&AS, 2011)

The building atop the hill,
The slanted roofs and the stone façade,
Setting foot in the hallowed corridors,
The grey pathway and the gleaming yard.



As the snow falls, settles and melts,
All friends huddle over cups of tea,
Conversations and laughter abound,
Some agree to disagree.

As an IAAS officer trainee, my thoughts replete,
Reading "History" of Yarrows, "Heritage" dawned,
The Civil servant in oneself felt fawned (over),
The circle of at least one journey, made complete.

Overseeing the valley, the monkeys frolic,
Some giggle, seeing others panic,
The sound of the train, pierces the fog,
VIP visits ensue trainees agog.

Treading on the cobbled stone pathway,
The flickering golden lights around the Buddha,
Evoked a sense of calm, divine
As one stopped to gaze, halfway.

As the year slides by, academics and activities collide,
As trainees learn more to abide,
The dots in the journey start to converge,
The opinions bend, some merge.

'Cedar' & 'Glen', the two other accomplices,
Weaving and unweaving a web of memories,
The pines that leave a soulful fragrance,
The mountain flowers with their rainbow countenance.

The footsteps start to fade away,
As the old make way for the new,
The memories however resound,
Paving a new path, for a few.
History and present combine,
To create an effervescent climate,
Learning and growth come together,
Yarrows - a thriving and prosperous gamut.

The surrounding woods, the bats and the owls,
The moonlight spreading its sheen,
The deodars gleaming and nodding,
The wind, in all seasons, keen.



In Praise of Yarrows

- Ms. Susan Rodrigues Viswanathan



Officers, gentlemen, dignified and calm
Excited like small boys with new toys
When the talk is of memories and gossip and
yarns
Of the days they first met; their troubles and
joys...
On the Ridge and the Malls
And in the hallowed halls
Of "Yarrows" ...
Strong and serene in their own domain
Lady officers, impressive to see
But the gracious, elegant, poised mien
Yields to joyous reminiscing, girlish glee...
Whenever they hear
That magic name so dear,
Yes, "Yarrows" ...
The stillness of the early morning view
To the velvety deep darkness of night.
First a valley drenched in mist and dew
Last, the myriad firefly sparkles of light...
As at the deck we stop and gaze
The view can enchant and amaze
From "Yarrows" ...

Wandering in Chaura Maidan or Jhaku
At Annandale, Baljee's or Lakkar Bazar,
Christ Church, Honey Hut or Summer Hill,
KTPs from near and far...
Quickly come to know
The best places to go,
Near "Yarrows" ...
Mere spouses can't compete
With the place in the heart so fond
Kept for Glen, Cedar and Willows
Billiard Room and Buddha pond.
For this there's no KD
The devotion is plain to see
To "Yarrows" ...
Cheers, then, a toast to Yarrows
Its greenery and happy spaces
Its lessons learned, wisdom shared
Its quiet nooks and party places...
And pray, may we always find...
Reasons to smile, peace of mind
At "Yarrows" ...



A Place That'll Always Be Home

-Ms. Pavaki Kapoor



These bricks hide memories.
They have stories to tell.
They whisper lost words quietly,
Those silent exchanges left unsaid.

The burning dreams of young souls
Are pressed between these pebbles.
Tiny footprints on the snow, ephemeral,
Fade away as the trees, green again, rustle.

Elysium to exhausted soldiers,
And mean monkeys rather red,
Scottish flowers, English forts,
Hidden away in winter woodland.

This distant land seems so cozy,
A most peculiar syndrome!
Adventure starts with running away
But yes, I always come home.



Colour pencil sketch by Mr. Hemal Mathur



Through Those Curious Eyes.....

(A friendly primate's account of the journey of 2006 batch OTs at Yarrows)

- Ms. Priya Parikh (IA&AS, 2006)

I remember being very young

When my family moved to an area far flung;

I was intrigued to see another group moving in
like us

Into the place they all called Yarrows;

I used to wonder what a queer bunch this was

While my family stuck to nature's rules, these

youngsters struggled to keep up with the

Academy's laws;

Every morning I saw them hurriedly stumbling

down the stairs to attend class

As I waited lazily for their return, stretching out

on the front lawn grass;

Oh yes! I had learnt all the fancy names- dare I

say

Be it OTs, Cedar, Glen or NAAA;

I remember feeling guilty that my family and I

often created such a ruckus

But these OTs gave us competition whenever there

was party night in the campus;



Enthused by our similarities, I thought,
“Why don't I become an OT?”

So there I was the next day, watching and
listening from the classroom balcony;

But all I got was amused looks followed
by laughter

Making my big dreams vanish into thin
air thereafter;

And then I decided to just be myself and
enjoy the antics of this odd group

Like when 7 of them played tennis in the
court at the same time

Or when they danced crazier than any
dancing troupe;

I watched them cry (over something
called DEs) and laugh together

Watched them fall (often when I followed
on their treks) and get back up together;

They wanted to grow from trainees to
officers as quickly as ever

Dunno whether that happened, but I
surely watched Yarrows turn them from
misfit strangers into friends forever.



(On the occasion of the cultural
programme organized by 2006
Batch OTs- Minjur, Priya,
Mukesh, Aswathy, Sidhhartha,
Deepna, Karma, Tanya, Atul)

Yarrows.....

By the Night

Pictures shared by Ms. Jeethu Cherian



यारोज़

- श्री अतुल प्रकाश (आइ ए & ए एस, 2006)



शिमला में यारोज़ में सुखद अनुभव का विवरण देना कठिन तो है परंतु असंभव नहीं है। 'घर से दूर घर' की सामान्य बोलचाल में चलन वास्तव में सही ही है। घर जैसा ही माहौल, घर जैसे ही परिवार, शायद सदस्यों को रंगमंच के अनुसार अपनी अपनी रोल बदल दी गई थी। मैं, बहुत ही शोभाग्यशाली हूँ, की मेरे बैच में आए मित्रगण से मिलना हुआ एवं साथ-साथ यारोज़ में भांति भांति के समय में ज्ञान अर्जन, प्रकृति के अनुपम दृश्यों का अवलोकन, हँसी सुखी के पल इत्यादि एक अनोखे परिवार के तरह से ही बिताया। मेरे 2006 के मित्रों का साथ बिताए पल आगे भी हमेशा याद रहेंगे। फैकल्टी का मिलना भी संयोग ही होता है। हमारे जैसे को हमारे मुताबिक ही फैकल्टी भी मिल गए जिससे ये तो सोने पर सुहागा वाली कहावत को चरितार्थ कर दिया। इस खुशी को अन्य मित्रगण के मुलाकात, जिसमें कुछ बैच के मित्र हमारे साथ साथ ज्यादा रहे, ने नई उमंग प्रदान किया। हमारा समय बहुत ही मधुरता के साथ गुज़रा।

इसके अतिरिक्त, हिमालय की वादियों के बीच रहने का मतलब ही कुछ विशेष होता है। देव भूमि जैसे प्रवित्र स्थल एवं शांति के माहौल से मन, बुद्धि और हृदय हमेशा प्रसन्नचित्त के मुद्रा में रहता था। जैसा हम सभी ने ये महसूस किया होगा की मन की सोचने की शक्ति काफी तीव्र हो जाती है, अगर वातावरण शांत एवं अनुकूल हो। इस भागती दुनिया में प्रकृति को मुझे दिल की आखों से देखने का मौका मिला, जिसे मैंने नहीं गँवाया एवं प्रकृति को नजदीक से देखा एवं समझा। जिस प्रकार, शांत तालाब में ही जल के अंदर देखा जा सकता है, उसी प्रकार से शांत मन से ही प्रकृति की अनुपम सौन्दर्य को समझा जा सकता है। अगर बहुत सारे विचारों के कंकर तालाब में फेकने से, तालाब से अंदर के देखना मुश्किल हो जाता है, उसी प्रकार से ज्यादा विचार भी, प्राणी को अपने सही सत्य को देखने में बाधा उत्पन्न कर देते हैं। शिमला के यारोज़ में रहने से मेरे मन में भी विचारों को आवश्यक बल मिला एवं जिससे प्रकृति का महत्व का छाप मेरे दिल पर छप गई।



Pen sketch by Ms, Gitali Tare (IA&AS, 1992)

वो कहते हैं मुझे

यारोज़...

उनसे पूछो

करते नहीं क्या मुझे- याद रोज़?

- सुश्री रूपराशि (आइ ए & ए एस, 1994)



"यार रोज़"

यूँ तो थे बहुत से पल

कुछ जुड़े

कुछ बिखरे यार दोस्त!

वो मैस के लफड़े

वो गर्म पानी के पचड़े

वो सुबह की चाय

वो शाम को

billiards aur carrom ke board

पर लड़ाई झगड़े;

कुछ KTP (*Keen Type Probationers*)

कुछ CTP (*Cool Type Probationers*)

वो खूबसूरत साड़ियों की सरसराहट

वो सूटेड बूटेड साथी

वो पुराने से आइनों में झाँकती सी मुस्कराहट ;

वो लहराते डाहलिया

वो गुनगुनाती सी धूप

बंदरों की मंडली

कुछ झुके से चीड़ देवदार

कुछ छुपे से लाल रोडो डेंड्रान...

यूँ सब बिखरे से हैं

यादों के यारोज की परतों में

सब अटके से है

हर दिनचर्या में हर रोज़

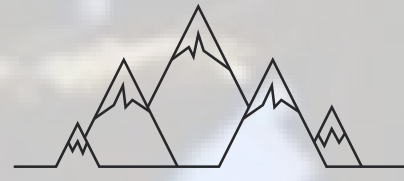
पर

जब मिलते हैं कुछ दोस्त

बन जाता हैं

निःशब्द स्वरों का समागम

यादों का यारोज!





यारोज़ उसे पुकारते

- सुश्री शुभा कुमार (आइ ए & ए एस, 1985, से.नि.)



थी हर तरफ हरीतिमा
स्वच्छन्द नील आसमां
मखमली वसुन्धरा
अनन्त रंग बिखर गया
उसी सजीव चित्र मे
वो एक था निलय खड़ा
हर एक को पुकारता
हर एक पथ निहारता
हर एक का वो प्यार था
हर एक उसे है चाहता
वो आज भी सजीव है
भले सदी गुज़र गई
वो याद उस भवन की
ज्यों प्राण मे उतर गई
उम्र अलग अलग भले

भले अनेक प्रान्त से
अनेक लोग आ बसे थे
उस निलय विशेष मे
विशेष था विशेष है
सदा रहे विशेष वो
रहे सदा यूँ जोड़ता
यार्दे अखंड अशेष वो
यारोज़ उसे पुकारते
उसकी छवि निहारते
उसकी सुनहरी याद तो
हम हर समय गुहारते





Yarrows....

*The Perfect
Winter Wonderland*

Pictures shared by Dr. Vishal Desai
(IA&AS, 2010)



आज की बारिश

- सुश्री मीनाक्षी शर्मा (आइ ए & ए एस, 1988)



देवदार का पेड हरा भरा जंगल
तेज बारिश गहरी अँधेरी पगडंडियाँ
झुकते बादल हवा सनसनाती मदमदाती
बहती हवा ठंड डर सिकुडन
अँधकार फैलता सा समय का बीतना
सूरज पर पर्दा बारिश का ठहराव
भीनी भीनी खुशबू धीरे धीरे ठहरता मौसम
हिलती टकराती शाखाएँ सूर्य का पर्दापण
छुपते सहमते पक्षी खुशनुमां समां
वानर परिवार सोंधी सोंधी गंध
उछलता कूदता झुँड ताजी महकती सुरभि
छम छम बारिश खिलता हँसता मन
बादलों की गडगडाहट एक मनोहर सुबह
गिरती बिजली का डर यैरोज में शिमला में
हिलते कंपकंपाते
भारी भरकम बूढे वृक्ष



Yarrows.... In Sun, Snow, Spring and Celebration

Pictures shared by NAAA, Shimla and Mr. Sunil Dadhe (IA&AS, 1988)

The Descent of a Certain C. Mouli

- Ms. Rebecca Mathai (IA&AS, 1989)



Raju waited for us to finish lunch before announcing the star descent. He told us the name of that star, though he knew that it wouldn't mean anything at all to us. Being Boddu Raju, he would also have known that we would ask the question that we finally did, "What can he do to us?"

If you are now wondering who Boddu Raju is, shame on you, how did you clear the civils, ah!? The falling standards! Raju was the PMC—President Mess Committee, our PMC, circa 1990.

A few weeks before, we had our first visitation with Sh. Satyavardhana. Raju told us that he was the ACP.

"Ah, police, ah?" someone asked.

It was to Raju's credit that he never showed his exasperation. No hitting the forehead with his palm or rolling eyes, etc. He explained in words that we were capable of understanding, "be careful. You mess with him, he will post you in the direction diametrically opposite to what you want after all this—", he waved his hand around, meaning after this training at Simla, Yarrows, Railway Board, Mall, Baljees, Goofa etc. Since for us, future extended only to the horizon of what lay immediately "after all this"—and nothing beyond— Sh. Satyavardhana, we realized, could wipe out our entire future.

We did our best. At the dinner table, we never once looked at Sh. Satyavardhana and if by chance, we felt his eyes on us, we shrunk into the chair. We might not have served non-vegetarian, in deference to his dietary choices, and even if Panditji had served it, we didn't risk that Sh. S should see us tearing into a chicken leg. Super-cautious, that's what we were.

After the dinner, I sidled up to Raju, "I think he looked at me". Raju shook his head sympathetically, "I told you to be careful."

"But I was!", I protested, "I had brushed my teeth and didn't open my mouth once". Mouth, I had come to understand, was my weak spot. Everyone has it, so did Samson. That human condition goes back to biblical times. Except our Boddu; he has no such spot, weak or otherwise.

"Don't tell me, I didn't warn you, that's all", Boddu Raju said

So naturally, after such an ominous visit, our question to the next one— the visit of a certain C.Mouli—would evoke the question, "What (harm) can he do to us?"



Raju's eyes brightened, "He is a star, ma! Big star".

The only star we recognized back then (an issue on which we could achieve rare unanimity on) was Dev Anand. Then Vikram Seth dropped in Yarrows for tea one evening. Now, that was a star. C.Mouli, who the heck?

But as always, in Boddu, we eventually placed our trust.

C.Mouli didn't want to dine with us, he was that sort, he just wanted to casually drop in at Yarrows in the evening. But our Joint Director, Sh. Santhanam Gopalkrishnan, would take no chances with us. He had set Boddu to make an early reveal of the casual visit. Yet, perceiving no real threat from C.Mouli (unlike Sh.Satyavardhana), we took our time to casually pull up our jeans over our night gowns and assembled in the lounge.

(Those days, the lounge was where we lounged. Wrapped in razais, with a nauseating smell of omelettes while we gazed longingly at Dev Anand from DVDs we trudded to the Mall to rent each week. The lounge was rarely dusted, the sofas had collapsed into a dense mass of cotton, its original colours indecipherably blended into a dirty grey. It felt like, and was, home. Sorry to break it you, Yarrows had seen some great days).

"There are two cras," Santhanam said with a gleam in his eyes while Chandramouli grinned next to him, "B.C.M and A.C.M" After a dramatic pause, he clarified (because we didn't get it in the first go, of course), "Before Chandramouli and After—"

Later, we translated this into simple words. If someone were to ask, "Bandar, tum ped se kab utara?", the answer was simple, "C.Mouli ke khande pe utara" C.Mouli had brought in the Darwinian evolution of the homegrown ape, *Auditopithecus Deepeeceeanus*.

That evening, Santhanam continued, "There are in the world many visionaries and imaginaries—", which was when the lights went off. It was a winter evening and darkness that fell into the room felt divine. What started as a light giggle from one of us, transformed into guffaws and loud laughter that reverberated in the dark hall. Santhanam would have known the provenance of each such disgusting sound, but the star, what would he know? And as the lights came back on, we quickly rearranged our faces, as poker as it can get, ready to receive the prose starting from where it had been interrupted—the world and its "imaginaries"...

C.Mouli was such a sport! Next day morning, he didn't show the slightest resentment when in the Railway building, we huddled around him as he undertook a walk-through of the Audit of Railway Stores on the computer, using the tool which too would come to be legendary in the evolution of the *Auditopithecus*—IDEA. That morning in the Railway Building, we tried to make our tears seem like that of joy; although besides Raju, there were some suspects among us, who must have actually cried with joy.



But we all were delighted, truly delighted, God-promise, when he said, “Now let me show you the results pictorially”. When the squares went into circles only to be gobbled up by triangles, we were ready to form a daisy-chain around him and dance “John chacha tum kitne achche, tumhe pyar karte sab bachche”. We didn’t, of course, because even we knew, we too, that there was a place and time for everything.

A year later when we stumbled out from Yarrows out into the real world, the audit world that is, we would come to rue that the visit was no ordinary one. C.Mouli was truly ahead of his time. A colossus. And when he left the Department for the UN, what was left behind was his blazing legacy, tales of which would come to be shared in lunch rooms and meeting rooms, with a deep sense of loss.

(I chanced on him, the first after Yarrows, at a UN audit junket. Upon introduction, he said, “Ah, I met you all at Yarrows”. He couldn’t have noticed, I hope, how I tried to shrink into the woodwork at that moment).

And yet, for us, the real star was, and has always been, Boddu Raju. Why, recently after I joined Headquarters on promotion, I asked Subbu, scratching my head, like the days of yore, “Are we to drop in and present our credentials? With covid and all...” Subbu shook his head, as helpless as I, and said as we often do, “Wish Boddu were here to guide us.” Boddu left India (and is a hot-shot in Antigua); so did six others of our batch. The collective charm of us, the chaff—or the allure in our ready surrender to them, the wheat—wasn’t enough to hold them back.

Trust us when we tell you. But for Boddu Raju’s timely inspiration—his virat image we carry in our hearts to this day—the small batch of 1989-90 would have been the kind that, if let into the senior management, would put the Department back on the tree, the very tree from which a certain other star called C.Mouli had decades before, engineered its descent.



Yarrows....A Vintage Retreat



Pictures
shared by
Mr. Praveen
Khanooja
(IA&AS,
1994)



Yarrows

-Ms. Vani Sriram (IA&AS,1987, Retd.)



‘Yarrows’. The name evokes myriad memories spanning over half the years of my life. It was about thirty-four winters ago, in December 1987, that I first set foot in Yarrows.

As a young probationer of the Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA&AS), after completing our three and half months foundation course in the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie, I reached Yarrows with my fellow probationers from Mussoorie, on a cold winter morning. We met a few other youngsters at Yarrows, who had joined directly at Shimla. We were a bunch of twenty-six enthusiastic, vibrant and multi-talented youngsters - sixteen from the IA&AS and ten from the Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS). The following twelve months were perhaps the best period of our lives. It was a roller coaster ride, bonding over trekking, hiking to Glen and Chadwick Falls, mall-ing, mid-night discussions, arguments, gossiping over coffee about the fitness levels of our Director and the brilliance of our two young Joint Directors, tennis, billiards, study tours (Treasury and PWD attachments), walks to Summer Hill and Viceregal Lodge, gulab jamuns at Baljces and AG Office, nankathai and macaroons at Chaura Maidan, trudging up the Railway Board Building after a heavy breakfast and lunch (the old green van often couldn’t climb the last stretch from the Cart road with so many of us), study of government accounts in the afternoons at the Gorton Castle, and of course the two Departmental Exams (DEs) (we were told ours was the first batch to have cleared both the DEs at one shot).

Yarrows has been ‘home’ to generations of IA&AS Officers. It is a home, where we were all pampered, right from waking us up in the morning with ‘Good morning Miss-Saab ji, chai’, to taking care of our ‘jugnu’ in winters. Pandit Ji’s cooking is etched in the memory of every officer who passed through the portals of Yarrows. Batch after batch of officers return to these hallowed surroundings to find bits of themselves left here as a budding probationer (now rechristened as Officer Trainees or OTs). The serene Buddha sitting under the tree is ever ready to be painted by the fresh batch of probationers/OTs. The creeper roses, the Japanese garden (which was renovated by us so lovingly and painstakingly), the cobbled stones, the immaculate lawns, the snow-capped mountains, the curios on the mantel piece and the now closed fire place in the lounge, stand testimony to countless moments of joy and fun lived-through by the IA&AS



probationers/OTs. Every batch of officers leaves behind its unique stamp on Yarrows. It is not really a 'shared experience', since every batch has its own little secrets which, for several years, were documented meticulously and passed down from one batch to the other.

Keeping in view the ever-growing number of mid-career training programmes and the increase in the number of probationers from IA&AS and ICAS, in 1987, Yarrows was expanded by constructing 'Glen' (ours was the first batch to move into this building) and 'Cedar', a few years thereafter. However, the entire complex continues to be called Yarrows.

Is it any surprise that none of us remember the 'Staff college' or the 'Academy' at Shimla that was instrumental in mentoring us and transforming young college pass-outs into hard-nosed audit professionals? It is always Yarrows that comes to mind when we think of our training period or a re-visit to the Academy for the various mid-career training programmes or orientation courses and so on.

The Academy brought together most of our batchmates to Yarrows in Autumn 2021 for a reunion. Yarrows was as splendid as ever and we had an opportunity to reminisce and re-live our golden period in the winter of our career with a bon-fire and singing, as has been our wont.

Yarrows is also entwined with my life, since it was here that I met my soul-mate. I see a reflection of everything beautiful and memorable about Yarrows in Sriram. Over three decades on, the love story rolls on.....





Yarrows..

In Full Bloom

Pictures shared by Ms. Aswathy VS
(IA&AS, 2006)





Yarrows - An Eternal Flower Flourishing Fragrance

- Mr. Sunil Dadhe (IA&AS, 1988)



It was in March 2021 that I came to Yarrows again as a resident and its custodian. The place has always been a “home away from home” and a fountainhead of energy, warmth and a unique fragrance that fills refreshing memories. This time was a little different. I undertook the task of understanding where this unique fragrance originates and what flourishes with it. With gratitude to IAAOWA, I share this understanding with the hope that it would help members of the Association appreciate a significant part of their spouses’ traits of personality and the values they cherish.

Yarrows, named after a flower that blooms in spring, is the first abode of all IA&AS officers. This is where we begin our professional journey. The beginning of this journey is characterised by a welcome - not only by humans but also by nature in its pristine, innocent expanse. The snow clad Himalayas, a lawn which dons white, yellow and green in winter, spring, and summer; roses and a variety of flowers in innumerable eye-pleasing colours and the soft singing breeze compete in speed to captivate young officers who arrive here.

While National Academy of Audit and Accounts, imparts induction training to officers of the Indian Audit & Accounts Service, Yarrows, a jewel in the queen of hills - Shimla, inculcates in them the ethos of the service. Officer trainees organise and participate in debates, quizzes, cultural evenings, photography, sports, trekking, yoga, etc. to ensure physical fitness, mental strength and intellectual sharpness. Officers so evolved play an important leadership role in their service careers accompanied by friendships for life.

The life at yarrows characterizes informality, fraternity and warmth in abundance. From making a snowman to simply basking in the Sun, here, everyone learns to be one with the batch. The meditating Buddha below the walnut tree, the deck offering a clear view of the Jakhoo Hanuman, the Vidhansabha, the AG office in historic Gorton castle all become indelible pictures to remember forever.

Without realizing when the place grows on you and connects you to a galaxy of elders who lend “pride in service” to share and heights of excellence to aspire. Yarrows sows these seeds of individual and “service” excellence and reaps its glory from its ex-occupants including Assistant Secretary General of United Nations, chairpersons and members of regulatory authorities, tribunals and public service commissions, Ex-Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, senior functionaries in Central and state Governments, CEOs of prestigious entities, advisors and executives at UN, World Bank and foreign Governments, distinguished thinkers and authors - all working to make our motherland proud.





Passing on from generation to generation the mantra “Karmanyewadhikaraste” Yarrows teaches us to serve the nation silently without expecting fame or acclaim. Yarrows, over time, gets etched in our hearts as “home away from home” witnessing lifetime warmth and fraternity.

After almost a year, we prepare to leave this place with a heavy heart wishing to return soon. As we leave, we carry with us the “belonging and love” received from and given to the staff, the batch mates, the faculty, the seniors. Yarrows, then, extends a warm invitation to return soon for a visit to rekindle its spirit. The heart fills with fresh fragrance again and a promise to flourish eternal happiness takes birth. We solicit blessings of the Gods of universe to welcome the “next batches” to join our family.

The unexpressed emotions perhaps imply -

Sah nau awatu (let us come together)

Sah nau bhunaktu (let us dine together)

Sah veeryam karwawahai (let us work together to beget glory)

Tejaswin Awadhi tamastu (let our shining success wipe out despair all over, always.)

Jai Hind.





Kullu ranges visible from Yarrows



View from the window of Glen

Yarrows..

And the views...

Pictures shared by Ms. Astha Giri



Sunset at Summer hill- as seen from Yarrows

Yarrows Revisited

- Ms. Mahua Pal (IA&AS, 1987, Retd.)



The whip was cracked. I was politely told in solemn words, that since I had been both probationer and faculty in Yarrows, I should write an article sharing my experiences and thoughts. And this was followed up a few weeks later, with a gentle reminder that the last date was fast approaching!!! And here I was, blissfully and happily, utterly engrossed in my ever-so-leisurely routine, unencumbered by deadlines especially those of a Bond-ed nature.

So! Fingers to keyboard, long fallen into disuse, except to send cryptic shorthand messages on social media or place orders on good old Amazon. I let my mind commence on the downhill from Cecil hotel, the narrow path full of twists and turns and lined with towering rhododendrons and mentally imploded the boulders, which all too often blocked ones smooth unobstructed passage into the hallowed portals of our Academy - YARROWS!

Yarrows, as we all learnt on initiation, is the name of a delicate pretty flower but the driveway from the gate to the main buildings are lined, at some height, with hydrangeas -glorious when they are in bloom. Many years back the driveway ended with the tennis courts, cordoned by a tall wire mesh which was covered with a flowering vine. This also doubled up as an auditorium for under-the-stars programmes but gave way to a new complex, Cedar, with an open courtyard and the tennis courts were housed in the rear. Change is the only constant!

I continue my journey on the narrow path and halt to pay obeisance to the Enlightened One, who sits in solitary splendour, fronted by a lotus pond and blessing all those wayfarers who come and go, some hurrying, some walking leisurely and capturing Him in their cameras. I wonder how many thousands of people the Buddha has seen. How many conversations has he heard? How many silent prayers has he heeded.. He sits there, quiet yet regal, alone yet not lonely. The Buddha undoubtedly occupies a significant place in the cache of all our memories.

Today, the Yarrows complex is a fully integrated one, with the Academy, hostels and residences of the DG and faculty, all housed within walking distance of each other. But I can yet vividly remember the times when we were probationers some three decades back, the challenges that our faculty faced due to lack of proper accommodation. But despite that, there was no lack of fine dining of home cooked meals and general merriment. So when I returned as faculty, I could really appreciate the luxury of walking into our residences in Willows. They may have been freezing, but the warmth and camaraderie of its occupants and walk-in open- door policy for a quick cup of steaming chai with snacks and discussions ranging from the mundane to higher philosophical subjects, are indelible memories.



The road - if you could call it that - from Chaura Maidan to Willows was then a badly potholed one, but that didn't deter us from walking and chatting and gossiping and laughing and sometimes, narrowly escaping a sprained ankle as one stepped inadvertently into a pothole, till we reached our homes, chuffed up from this goodish walk.

In any case, there was little option as that was the only entry and exit to Chaura Maidan. So also the kutchra road from Willows and the rear gate of the Academy to the Institute of Advanced Studies. It was a good nature trek, with the dense Glen forest unfailingly providing a visual treat. I do recall a bhutta-wallah sitting against the wall, as soon as one emerged from the path in front of the Institute gates. The smell of the roasting corn and the tender kernels garnished with a dash of salt and lime were out of the world; and I can yet feel the taste as I recall those moments. Today this road has been tarmacked and comfort and convenience are the order of the day.

I have a recollection of a rather funny episode while I was residing in Willows. I was the proud owner of a second-hand Maruti 800 which remained parked just outside. One fine morning I woke to the sight of a vacant parking lot and the car missing. My dear colleagues immediately joined me in my hunt. One of them walked to the edge of the path and peered deep and long to check whether my car had rolled down. I am certain that I would not have been reassured by such actions. But within hours we had traced it a few kms away, lying abandoned on the roadside. Possibly taken for a night drive by spirited University students. No guesses where the celebrations were that night!

Let's journey back in time to Yarrows. We as probationers... Ours was a pretty large batch as Civil Accounts officers too trained with us. And there was no dearth of talent. Singing, dancing, acting - you name it and many hands would be raised. And those who may have lacked the talent, yet had an over-abundance of enthusiasm and would be in the forefront, vocal chords fully exercised, till they were admonished by the lead conductor to only noiselessly mouth the words. I am on Top of the World and Aa Chal ke Thuje main leke chaloo, became the batch anthems and have been replayed over the years, at various get togethers. So we gained the not so popular sobriquet of Naach-Gana-Nautanki batch. We couldn't care less. We loved to do what we did. And that brings me to a very droll anecdote.

The then Director of the Academy - Diro as he was fondly called - instructed us to put up a show for a Parliamentary Committee visiting us. Well, that was easy-peasy. We had a full fledged variety programme ready in no time. Now came the conundrum. The other batch undergoing their training was instructed to sit in the audience, so that there were no empty seats and there was a decent show of strength. However - and this became the source of immense anger, injury and insult - simultaneously they were instructed to clap and retire. In short they could not attend the dinner afterwards. Hell broke loose. There was nothing short of a mutiny. But as happens, management had their way. We danced, sang and acted and partook of the feast while the spectator batch was left seething. To this day we are not allowed to forget that they were humiliated because of us. It's a different matter that the two batches are the best of buddies and can recall that event as vividly as if it were yesterday and have a jolly good laugh at the end of it.





Every batch is replete with its own unique stories and memories. Some sound almost unbelievable but believe them you must, even if these are taken forward only by word of mouth, without the stamp and seal of those magnificent KDs. Like the probationer who punched a hole in the wall as he did not get a posting of his choice; or two romancing probationers falling down the hill at the narrow bend just outside the gates, but thankfully remaining in one piece. Like constant background music, some stories remain universal to all batches - romances, broken hearts, short-term and life-long partnerships, messing issues, billiards by night to the distress of the room just above it, as many players deemed it necessary to hit the ceiling with their cues, either in celebration or in frustration, the treks to Kufri, Chadwick Falls and Glen or to the monkey infested Jakhu temple and the compulsive walks to the Mall, Scandal point and Kali Bari. We partook of steaming G-Jams at Baljees which for years was a landmark eatery and has now given way to restaurants serving more modern palates. Diwan Chand was a hot favourite then and remains so even now. Quality ensures lifelong loyalty! As also the Chinese shoe shops. Though nothing really Chinese about them. Lakkad Bazar was also much sought after for knick knacks.

These trips to the Mall were so much more frequent when we as probationers trained in the Railway Board Building where the Academy was then housed. An architectural marvel but ever so cramped. The faculty rooms were mere cubby holes with temporary partitions and not an iota of privacy. Two small classrooms! Seems unbelievable when one sees the Academy now, with its state of the art facilities. And yet we had such great times in the Academy at Railway Board Building. We were regulars of the Chai wala just across the road. An absolute necessity, as breakfast for many was a scrappy affair if one was a late riser and wanted a seat in the rickety matador that drove us to the Academy.

But a nice big bus was managed a few years later, when I returned as faculty and that too very smartly by the then probationers, who took the spousal route of the visiting CAG, to make a heart-rending case, so much so, that the sanction was given almost on the spot. Probationers truly are amazing creatures. They can be at each other's throats one minute, daggers drawn, quarrelling about the most inconsequential things and the next minute they would be comrades in arms, brilliant in their comprehension of problems and skills in resolving them. The ingredients of OLQ and appropriate dressing and socialising made for a very difficult recipe. To shave or not to shave? Slippers on the courts? Many years later I had a faculty asking me whether noodle straps constituted appropriate dressing or not. Should liquor be served publicly? Well there are no black and white answers. One just needs to go with the flow and take decisions according to the situation and circumstances existing at any point in time.

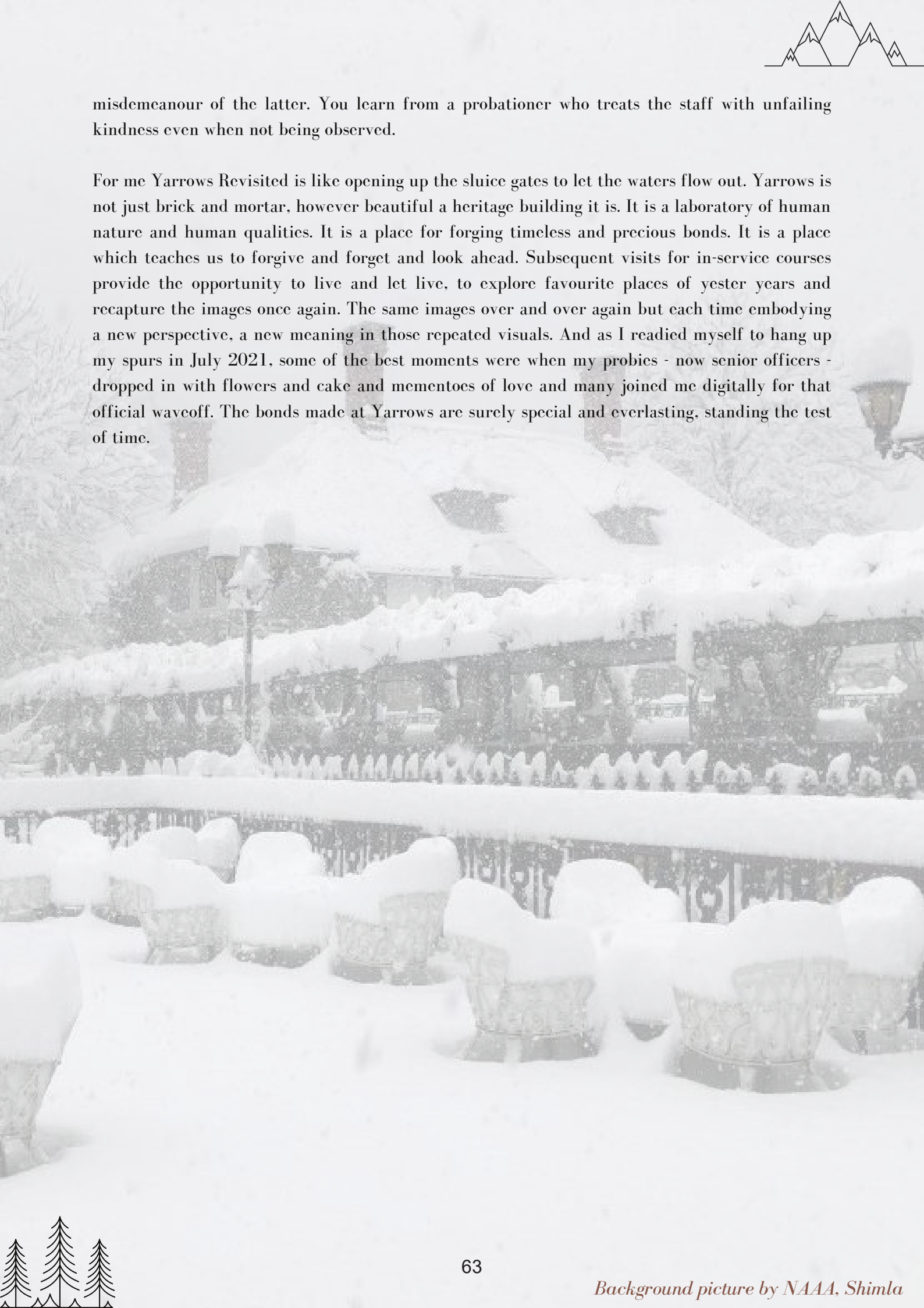
Faculty is as much a student in so many ways. You learn from that probationer who spontaneously raises his hand indicating a foul during a game of volleyball, though it was completely unnoticed by others. You learn from a probationer who enters the kitchen not just to supervise as a Mess Committee member but to roll up his sleeves in a joint effort with the staff to bring hygiene and order. You learn from a probationer who faces personal tragedy stoically and courageously. You learn from a probationer who gives his personal time to coach others. You learn from that probationer who is a sworn enemy of another, but refuses to snitch on a





misdemeanour of the latter. You learn from a probationer who treats the staff with unfailing kindness even when not being observed.

For me Yarrows Revisited is like opening up the sluice gates to let the waters flow out. Yarrows is not just brick and mortar, however beautiful a heritage building it is. It is a laboratory of human nature and human qualities. It is a place for forging timeless and precious bonds. It is a place which teaches us to forgive and forget and look ahead. Subsequent visits for in-service courses provide the opportunity to live and let live, to explore favourite places of yester years and recapture the images once again. The same images over and over again but each time embodying a new perspective, a new meaning in those repeated visuals. And as I readied myself to hang up my spurs in July 2021, some of the best moments were when my probies - now senior officers - dropped in with flowers and cake and mementoes of love and many joined me digitally for that official waveoff. The bonds made at Yarrows are surely special and everlasting, standing the test of time.



The Yarrow's Crossword

Lets put to test what you remember of Yarrow's!

Click on the crossword below, to start attempting the crossword!

ACROSS

- 3 The mountain range visible from Yarrows Deck
- 4 Name of the DG's house
- 5 Red flower which blooms around Yarrows in March
- 8 A hostel accomodation in the Yarrows complex which named after a tree
- 10 This flower surrounds the Yarrows arch and board
- 11 Name of the Officers' accommodation

DOWN

- 1 AG office visible from Yarrows Deck
- 2 Yarrows is actually the name of a _____
- 6 A heritage hotel situated near the Academy
- 7 historically Yarrows was the home of _____
- 9 The helipad visible from Yarrows

P.S All the answers are are hidden in this Yarrows Special Edition of **Abhikhya!**



The Mighty Buddha



When the First Rays of the Sun Strike the Window (A Day at Yarrows)

- Mr. Abhay Singh (IA&AS, 2012, Resg.)



The first rays of the sun strike the window, but the warmth of the quilt is too inviting, and it takes a long, sincere and honest effort to pull one's being out of bed, into the mild cold of a sunny spring morning at Yarrows. The floor is cold.. But, as they say, the bigger the sacrifice, the better the award. Yarrows doesn't disappoint one either. As one hops into the sports shoes, to go on a morning walk, the serenity of Yarrows and surroundings is ready to welcome you. The rays of the sun start to dance on the Swiss Chalet Architecture of this heritage building, and one begins to acknowledge that leaving the bed early wasn't a bad deal at all.

A short walk, surrounded by the mountainous forest, brings one to the youthful Rhododendron flowers, the state flower of Himachal. Bright pink and red in colour, they impart breath-taking contrast to the otherwise green landscape. The cold breeze brushes past one's face, sending a mild chill down the spine. The quiet ally, with hardly any passers-by, suddenly opens at cross-roads. You find yourself standing at the front of the erstwhile Viceregal Lodge, now rechristened as Indian Institute of Advanced Studies. It is now, that one realises, that the two old friends, Yarrows and the Viceregal Lodge, don't stand too far apart. They must be having lots of stories to share I'm sure, of the times gone by, of the men and women of Shimla, of the British Raj days...

It is time to make a decision, whether to trace the path back to Yarrows through the beautiful Rhododendron flowers, or take a full circle from the front of the vintage Cecil Oberoi Hotel located at Chaura Maidan. Whichever path one takes, one finds oneself soon sitting at the Yarrows Lawn, enjoying the morning sun. Right at this moment, you are offered a cup of morning tea, accompanied with a warm smile of the friendly staff. Nature has its role in making Yarrows beautiful, but it is the staff of Yarrows which makes it so very pampering. The exceptional service attitude of the staff, an inherent attribute of the hill culture, is what makes Yarrows the home it has been to generations of IA&AS officers.

Mild chill, morning sun, aroma of tea and latest headlines of the newspaper - one wishes that the time would stop. But then, duty calls. Yarrows is not only a residential space, it is also a transformative one. It transforms men and women into competent officers. It is time for classes. One would normally expect that the transition from serene Yarrows to the classroom at Academy would be a painful one - one is for a happy surprise. This is nothing like a boring, conventional classroom. Surrounded by Pine forests, away from the hustle of the city, one feels like sitting at the centre of a forest, learning new things, almost like an ancient Gurukul. If somehow, one doesn't feel interested in the ongoing discussion, which is a rare phenomenon, one can always find solace looking out of the window at the activities of our evolutionary ancestors - monkeys and langurs.





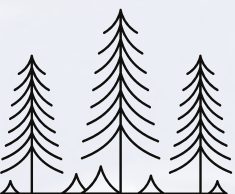
The stairs that take you down in the morning, from Yarrows to the Academy, act as a natural physical fitness exercise, as you climb up back to Yarrows for lunch. Every time it's a challenge to climb them, and at this point one feels an immense sense of respect for the natives of hilly places, for the arduous life they live. As one reaches the final lap of completing this 'uphill' task, the Yarrows Deck offers a nice breathing spot. A platform jutting out onto the Glen Valley, the Deck offers a splendid panoramic view. You can see the Glen Valley and the majestic Himalayas beyond. It is from here that one can see the red canopies of Gorton Castle, another heritage building of Shimla, also operational as the AG Office, Himachal Pradesh. As one looks beyond, one can see the exalted Hanuman Statue at Jakhu Peak, the monkey-god standing, in all his might, like a protector of the inhabitants and the city.

Once again, the cycle of walking down to Academy for after-lunch classes and climbing up, at the end of the day, is repeated. Thanks to greenery around, glimpses of Himalayas and pleasant weather of Shimla, even this arduous task becomes a sport. As one heads towards his or her room, one passes by the serene Buddha Statue, seated near the lotus pond. Buddha is smiling, as always. Some days he smiles more than usual. Maybe he knows about the unfinished assignment that was to be submitted today. Though one feels like going straight to the room, and working on the audit assignment, as always, there is a cry, from a dear friend, inviting me for a cup of tea at Yarrows Lounge. As one enters the Lounge, there is this entire gang of friends, planning for the evening. The audit assignment can wait. Buddha smiles again.

The evening is well spent. Some walk off to The Mall, a preferred hangout place while some put on their sports gear and head toward the Tennis court. The health-conscious guy is very particular about visiting the gym, while those who can't wait for the Tennis court to become free, run towards the Squash Court instead. Incidentally, there is nobody in the Table Tennis Hall today, as the TT Champ is busy watching a movie in the TV Room. Others prefer chatting away the evening over sips of hot ginger tea, sitting idly in the Lounge, looking at the beautiful interplay of setting sun and clouds, through the sheer curtains. The quiet of the evening is suddenly broken by the instrumentalist who has recently learnt to play the drums. The evening slowly slips into the veil of night.

As one takes an after-dinner walk around the Lawn, the beautifully lit Yarrows looks even more serene. On the periphery of the lawn, amongst so many beautiful flowers, you may meet 'Yarrows', a flowering plant native to temperate regions, on whose name the heritage building has been named. And as you walk by the tallest Devdar tree, standing alone, in all its majesty, overlooking the Yarrows Lawn, you may catch a glimpse of the Flying Fox, taking a leap towards the roof of the Glen, the Guest House. The audit assignment is waiting. You start a walk towards the room. It's a tempting world. Why did the Billiards Room have to fall on the way to the room? One game, just one. And who has ever come out of the Billiards Room, only after 'one' game!?!

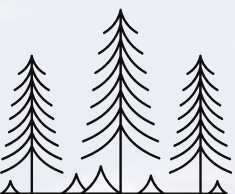
Finally, a tryst with the audit assignment. It is quite late at night. It was a nice game of Billiards. Or rather games. Yarrows has always instilled a strong sense of commitment in its inmates. The assignment is finally over. You can hear the sound of a light breeze outside. As you peep outside





the window, you can see slight mist around the lamps. The surrounding mist makes them look so mystical. The eyes are getting heavier. It's time to call it a day. It's really a blessing of the Almighty to be part of a magical place like Yarrows.

Then, the first rays of the Sun strike the window. The warmth of the quilt is too inviting.....





"Though I longed for my home, I realized that she had been instilled within me. Wherever I went and whomever I became, her remnants would always remain."

- Anonymous





Coming Up Next....

What's in store for the next edition of Abhikhya?

A Trip to the Seven Sisters

Seven Sisters is what they are famously called and so no one needs any introduction to the states of the North-East. Considered among the most gorgeous, wondrous, and least explored regions in our country, Northeast India is a wonderland; and that is where *Abhikhya* aims to take the Indian Audit & Accounts family for the next edition!

Dear IA&AS family, we would like to feature your experiences and memories from your postings in/visits to Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim... An anecdote or a piece that would give a glimpse to the beautiful diversity the land has!

Moreover, if you do call any of these mesmerising places your home, if your roots belong to these eight states, do drop a message about what the place means to you! It does not have to be in English. Share with us articles in your mother tongue!

While we are doing the North-East as our cover story for the next edition, as always, *Abhikhya* also invites prose, poetry, paintings and photographs on any theme you would like; and we welcome every one of the IAAS family - grandparents, parents and children - to share!

Please send in your contributions to editoriaaowa@gmail.com. Articles should be within 800 words.

As we conclude this edition, we would love to have your feedback for this Yarrows Special Edition of *Abhikhya* to continue making the coming editions even more interesting. Please click [here](#) to fill in your feedback. Thank you!

As always, we look forward to reading you all!

Once again, wishing our dear IA&AS family a warm and prosperous 2022!

With the Warmest Wishes,

Ms. Swati Singh

Secretary, IAAOWA



Ms. Swati Singh, an MBA holder, loves travelling; and when she isn't on a journey, she loves penning down thoughts and stories. She is the spouse of Mr. Dharmendra Kumar (Batch 2000)



Indian Audit and Accounts Officers'
Wives Association
(IAAOWA)



Inspired to Empower. Determined to Succeed