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JDSOLA's Independent Student Publication

THE LIBERAL CANON



Editor's Note

The festival of lights brought happiness, closure and warmth almost a year and a half after we shut out doors to social interaction. This break was personally very refreshing, filled with sweet, delicious food and lovely faces. As mentioned in October most of us struggled to keep up with the plethora of assignments and projects, midterm season was at its peak. While we still had submissions this month, it brought a close to the ICAs and welcomed the TEEs -- another daunting thought! In that spirit, I wish you all the best for the remaining papers in December. The TLC hopes you can milk as much of the online privilege before you are actually sitting in room 501 and staring at the invigilator, wondering why college ever started. Still, we are super excited to come back on campus, meet our long lost peers and eat cheese schezwan dosa from Anand. I am particularly excited to see the entire team of TLC together, including juniors who have blessedly contributed but I never had the pleasure to meet -- until the next month of magic, jolly music and lots of parties (December, of course!).

While it will definitely be a tough experience to move out of the comfort of our homes and wake up at 7 AM for an 8:00 AM class instead of 7:59 AM; I am almost certain that the adjustment will be worth it. Learning from the teachers by actually looking at them in real time -- a concept that has grown completely foreign is a very attractive educational offer.

For the TYs, as we struggle, whine and go back to having mental breakdowns in the staircase, I hope this last semester is filled with good grades, memories that we reminisce about and a positive comeback to the glass building of NMIMS. As for the FYs and SYs, I wish that you all finally get to live the college days that everyone raves about, sit in the canteen with your batchmates and openly flaunt that you are in the new building compared to other NMIMS students in Mithibai. On that note, the end of November marks a new beginning for all of us with the revival of offline college.

I hope we are kind to the ones who are having a hard time and that we attempt to enjoy every moment that we can. We must try to be grateful that in the decade of a pandemic we have been advantageous enough to have survived and returned back to some amount of normalcy. I'll see you all soon enough!

Sanah Shah

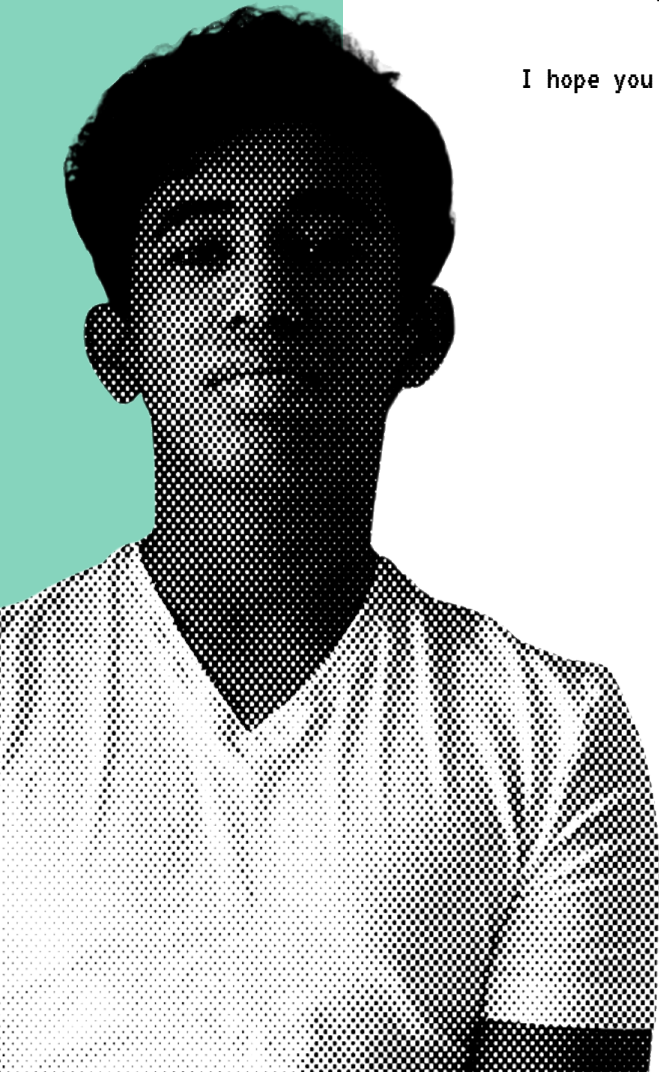


Editor's Note

It is quite clear that we are moving from one of the most hectic months in this semester to this month of Diwali. At least for the first week, we should unwind and take the time to ourselves: Relax. I have not been one for celebrations, but I do think a short break from academics does entail that considering how all of us would be giving our semester end exams in December.

By the time all of us receive this edition of The Liberal Canon, we would also have the Halloween edition, it does add for a quick fun read. "Pop and Pain: When Art Means Nothing" by Saachi Gupta is one piece that definitely hit close to home and exuded a different perspective of art. But that's not just it. I was quite fascinated reading the article, "Why do our Cities Flood" by Shriya Krishnan in this edition. Primarily based on the observations from the 2015 Chennai Floods and relating it to the city of Mumbai, it does give us an insight into how lack of efficient urban planning can cause trouble and the importance of maintaining our natural resources.

I hope you enjoy this edition as much as I did!



Ashwanth Aravind Vidhya



THE JOURNEY TO SELF-CARE



SACHI SARAF

We live in a world which is made out of variety; a variety of colors, seasons, and most importantly, people. Each of us are unique, and we live with a unique set of worries and anxieties. Some of us worry about our job, some about their family, or their parents' health and others about their kids' future. In this fast-growing world, stress and anxiety are almost inevitable. But the silver lining here is that our evolved knowledge about mental health has equipped us with multiple ways to cope with these stresses.

When I dropped out of Architecture in the first year, my confidence and self-worth took a hard hit. I would cry myself to sleep every night, shiver at the thought of having to speak publicly, and felt like a complete waste of space. I knew I was not myself and that I needed help to get better, but I constantly felt as if I didn't deserve it. With the support of my loved ones, I finally decided to seek help from a psychotherapist and began working on myself. The most basic trick I learned there was to breathe. We really underestimate the power of long, deep breaths. Every time you feel anxious, just acknowledge the signs, close your eyes, and take 5-7 deep and steady breaths. It works like magic!

The most complex thing I learned was to know myself, to identify my triggers and work around them; and most importantly face my anxiety! Today, I can confidently say that I am the best version of myself and that I am proud of my growth. I appreciate my exclusive set of strengths and weaknesses; I celebrate my victories and (this is my star trick) I am kind to myself for my failures.





POP AND PAIN:

WHEN ART MEANS NOTHING



SAACHI GUPTA

Until five minutes ago, I thought I wasn't going to write anything for November's issue. In fact, I thought I was never going to write again. I'm still a little sceptical — but it's past midnight, and I suddenly had a familiar urge and a fully-formed idea. It's a different route from the one I'd usually take — no cleaned-up, casual commentary on my hyper fixation of the month — but I'm willing to go down this road tonight.

In the last few days, I have discovered grief like never before. It's almost funny — this, coming a year after the death of two grandparents and a close friend — yet, I feel entirely, unprecedentedly entangled in my present loss, like a fly in a spider's web. Amidst this emotion that has knocked me off my feet in all its jarring, all-consuming glory, pop culture has felt ridiculously distant. The Netflix app has been unopened for days, and social media has disappeared from my cell phone.

As I find myself without the will to watch anything, my YouTube 'watch later' playlist grows by the hour, in the hopes that I will one day find the same things interesting again. The books I bought as Diwali gifts for myself have been laid aside for better days. All this should, of course, be a testament to the irrelevance of popular culture and the media we consume — yet, somehow, it is the same art that is getting me through the hurt.

A friend of mine is going through a similarly difficult time. From morning to night, we find ourselves texting each other songs that are 'just perfect for this situation.' One moment, I find myself sobbing to Taylor Swift's "All Too Well." A few seconds later, I am racing away from my anger in a small bedroom to Dodie's "Monster." I have also discovered the joys of ABBA, a band I always liked but dismissed as a little too melodramatic for me. When riding shotgun with the friend mentioned above, we've wound up passionately screaming the words to "The Winner Takes It All" more than once on the same journey.

I've looked for the way I feel in movies and television series. At twelve, when I watched Titanic 3D in the theatre, I felt the same emptiness as today on the ride home, a hole in my chest that made me feel like nothing would ever be okay again. I felt it when I watched Friends a year later, sobbing uncontrollably on the floor as the last episode came to a close. CBS's Mom, I decided, did not showcase grief in all its complexity — but the last episode of Mare of Easttown left me feeling sore and enraged for a day. I always expected Bob Newby from Stranger Things to die, and yet, his character was so real that I could imagine every moment he'd laugh in, every quip he'd respond with, long after he was gone.

When I watched Twilight: New Moon for the first time, I scoffed at the overdramatized, infamous scene that showcased Bella Swan sitting by her window, unmoving, as the months flew by. Yet, on a phone call yesterday, when I tried to place the day something had happened, I had no idea — it could've been two weeks or two days ago. When a friend texted me to ask what time I sleep at, my (undeniably

annoying) reply stated, "IDK. 9 pm and 2 am feel like the same thing."

Last night, I impulsively decided to try Beck's Depression Inventory — a decision I am sure will leave my therapist exasperated in two days when I tell her.

I expected the score to be the usual — something like 14 or 16, at the most. Instead, I found myself staring at a whopping 43, my brain sarcastically screaming High Score! because of all the mobile games, I'd spent my teenage years playing.

I found myself thinking of Normal People, where Connell Waldron fills out the same worksheet — the anxiety and uncertainty of it, the way the pen hovers over the paper for some time. I'd had the pleasure of knowing Beck and his inventory before I ever knew of Normal People's existence, and yet, I felt the same nervousness every time. A few years ago, all my writing revolved around the sudden numbness I felt with the vibrance of childhood far behind me. Then, someone I knew recommended I read *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. It's a book I've held close since then, for the way that things spiral out of control before the reader even realises it's happening. During a haunting and deepening depression that leaves the protagonist

Esther Greenwood maddened and incapacitated. She finds herself unable to do what she does best: write. I remember thinking, then, that no matter what I feel like, I'll always have writing to escape to. Unfortunately, I am no longer as optimistic or certain as I used to be.

Normally, its comfort shows that I keep going back to it. In times of crisis, all that plays in the house is Brooklyn Nine-Nine, Friends or Schitt's Creek. Yet, this once, I felt betrayed and abandoned by the normalcy of these shows. Instead of seeking the usual distractions, I have found myself unable to deal with the hypocrisy of having to watch them and pretend that Everything is fine.

It is times like these that leave me wondering: does art need to be anything beyond relatable? Do we seek any meaning beyond solidarity — or are we just matching the columns: our grief to theirs, our insecurities to theirs, our happiness to theirs? A thousand times on the Internet, I've read that art is meant to "disturb the comfortable, and comfort the disturb." But maybe all it's meant to do is take people through moments in their lives, and remind you that this has happened before. Others have lost the ones they loved the most, and others have eaten breakfast at noon.

It's not easy, but everything has happened before, and you're not special.



Self-Love

DRISHITA COELHO

// I wish time had a better timing for you
and me //

Whenever I think of you,
I begin to write invisible love letters to
your heart
wishing it reached you way back in time.

// I wish time had a better timing for you
and me //

I had storms of wishes to let out.
My eyes began to rain,
I didn't wish for happiness,
just a little less pain.

For you I weathered,
your actions like waves hit the shore.
Making me lesser of who I was yesterday,
like a flame in the middle of the ocean.

I became nothing to make you everything.

// I wish you had a better timing for you
and me //

I'm floating on barren land,
in the middle of nowhere.
My heart is so full of you,
I can barely call it my own.

The room's unlit,
but I'm caressed.

Shadows in a dark room holding on to
me,
darker than our yesterday's
clearer than I could ever see.

// I wish I had a better timing than waiting
for love only I could ever give me //



WHY DO OUR CITIES FLOOD?

SHRIYA KRISHNAN

Towering trees shrouding broken cars, people wading through water and yellow autos drowning in water. This is what my Twitter feed has looked like for the past few days. On November 6, the city of Chennai recorded 230 mm of rainfall. The Tamil Nadu Centre of the Indian Meteorological Department issued a warning for 18th November in Chennai and neighbouring territories forecasting heavy rainfall owing to low pressure developing over the coast. The city of Chennai has recorded its highest rainfall since the disastrous 2015 floods. The 2015 Floods claimed more than 500 lives and caused massive economic damages.

In fact, the Madras high court remarked on 9th November, "For half of the year we are made to cry for water and for another half we are made to die in water", criticizing the Greater Chennai Corporation. Some journalists have pointed out how Chennai's growth in the low-lying regions may be one of the reasons for the stagnation of water. After the eye-opening 2015 Floods, efforts were put in to build numerous stormwater drains in Chennai. Even during 2015, citizens blamed the floods on the mishandling of the water bodies by the state. Pallikaranai Marsh, a wetland in Chennai houses a large garbage dump.

This wetland has shrunk in size mainly due to urbanization. The marsh has seen the building of residential complexes to satisfy the growing population needs of the metropolis, IT Complexes and the aforementioned garbage dump.

The story of Chennai sounds quite familiar to the residents of Mumbai. Every year, Mumbai finds itself flooded leaving everyone with the same question-Why does Mumbai flood every year?

The answers are quite similar. Mumbai's growing appetite for housing forces it to encroach on natural land and the land loses its ability to soak up water to prevent stagnation. The waste clogs the drains and pollutes our river bodies leaving the water nowhere to escape. Reclamation of land from the sea, an outdated drainage system, inefficient drainage projects are all part of this mess. We have all read articles about

Mumbai getting submerged by 2050 due to rising sea levels. It is the once-dense Mangrove forests that have saved and protected Mumbai for so long. With their depleting numbers and plastic-polluted roots, we may soon lose this natural defense because of our endlessly ambitious construction projects. From the 1990s to 2005, Mumbai lost an alarming 40% of its Mangroves. Fishing communities are threatened of losing their livelihoods and lives if Mangroves continue to disappear from our map.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has reclaimed 100 hectares of land from the sea for the ambitious 26 km coastal Road Project which aims to connect 2 ends of the city. Civil society groups are working with native fishing communities to protect Mangroves and lobby against such projects, serving as an important reminder that taking nature for granted comes at a heavy and irreversible cost. An article by Sanket Jain in The Daily Beast discusses how recurring floods cause major agrarian distress in the country by putting vulnerable communities in massive debt. In the same article, a farmer tells the journalist "The climate has become unpredictable, and so have our lives,".

Most experts seem to hold the view that cleaning rivers, protecting wetlands and conserving mangroves are the right places to start and that is exactly what we should demand.



Diwali

Lessons from an Alit Diya

AKANKSHA DAS

My flickering, wasted heart uncoils
Like a wick of cotton submerged in oil
Embracing the changing hues of a flame
It burns in search of reasons it cannot
name

This is a futile exercise
The jagged fragment of me, that is broken,
cries
The outpour of all the hurt amassed from
the dimming of a light , it once hoped,
would forever glow
That is extinguished like my Diya when a
strong gust of wind blows

Why do you do this in vain?
It asks when I strive to light my lamp once
again
What is there for us to learn ?
In watching flaming candles that won't
forever burn

I smile then, as the glowing embers
Flicker brightly on a dark November
And sigh the softest , little smile
And ask my heart to wait a while

Patience - for not everything that burns
corrodes
I tell it when this practice feels like the end
of an empty road
In pitch black darkness , there is something
to see
To behold the limitless possibilities

That comes when a lone light glimmers in
the dark
The knowledge that a frail impression of
fire is still a spark
That chooses to set itself alight
And inspires within the broken a little fight

Offers those blinded in this bleak abyss
A moment of clear vision , the probability of
a chance they might not miss
When overflowing grief tells them to give
up
The sizzling flame reminds them of the
blessings that runneth over their cups
And how, for all that you think has been
taken from you, you still have so much to
give,
Is what a burning flame teaches you about
perspective

In your fluttering irises, you'll find this flame
reflect
When the Diya guides you to introspect
To take in all that you've learnt to be
In the wake of fleeting uncertainty.
As you find permanence in your reasons,
you'll know
That illuminating the dark is just another
way for us to grow



JD16 LOVES

Movie



The Darjeeling Limited

Book



The Palace of Illusions
- Chitra Banerjee
Divakaruni

TV show



Bob's burgers

Podcast



The Stories of
Mahabharata,
- Sudipta Bhawmik

Online course



Udemy Online Classes-
introduction to python

Workouts



30-Minute HIIT Cardio
Workout- SELF

Games



Rummy cool
Online Card Game

Take out



Francesco's Pizzeria

Insta page of the month



The Dodo, animal
rescue page. @thedodo

Bored games



A Dark Room

Apps



Spotify

Online shops



Urbanic

Mental well being organization



The Banyan

Sneakers of the month



Jordan 1 Retro High
obsidian

Art



The starry night,
Vincent van Gogh

Destination



The High Line,
New York.

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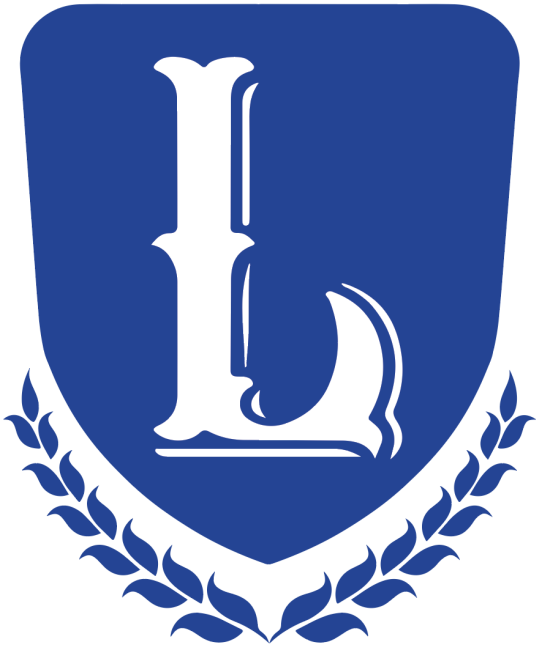
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