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COVER ART
SOMDIP DATTA

Hello and Welcome to the 2018 Saraswati Puja of the Somerset Bengali Association.

SBA was conceived as a platform to practice and promote Bengali traditions, customs and culture. From being a 'ghoraa' puja for a dozen families, we have grown by leaps and bounds and now are a 150+ families strong community that is a beacon of togetherness for all Bengalis in our area. It's our home away from home, a closely knit extended family that stands together in good times and bad. It's an abode for new families moving into the area that are looking for friends whom they can relate to easily.

We have been blessed to have such a wonderful and welcoming community. SBA has now become much more than an annual puja. This year we plan to introduce a new event to celebrate the Bengali New Year, Poila Boishakh on April, 14th 2018.

Our children have always been the driving force for everything that we do. SBA helps them lay roots with their heritage as well as connect with other kids that share that heritage. It is an avenue that helps them make new "best friends forever" as they participate in the Saraswati Puja cultural programs, play games at our picnic and volunteer at our events.

SBA aims to arrange cultural and educational events in New Jersey. We did quite a bit in 2017. The annual picnic in summer had all of us playing games outdoors as we binged on the delicious food. The post Diwali Puja in fall was a celebration with our first-ever albeit very entertaining fashion show. We started our philanthropic initiative "SBA Cares" thereby providing a variety of volunteer opportunities for everyone who wants to give back something meaningful to the society,

We thank our participants, directors, choreographers, committee coordinators, members, grand patrons, sponsors and retail partners for their gregarious effort and unwavering support in bringing this gala event together. We extend a very warm welcome to you and your families and hope that you enjoy this fun-filled day of music, dance and scrumptious delicacies.

We look forward to seeing you at all our future events and becoming an active member of our organization. For further details about our events or becoming a member, please visit our website and FaceBook page.

Board of Trustees -

Ashish Das, Indrajit Ghosh, Manjari Chowdhury, Mitushi Banerjee, Niloy Jana, Probir Dhara and Soma Choudhury


Teenage Suffrage

Rishi Mukherjee

In theory, the United States of America is a democracy, where every man is created equal and everyone has equal rights, such as voting. But this isn't the true case, and America isn't a true democracy for many reasons. In the America I know, you have to be 18 to do a lot of stuff. You have to be 18 to vote which is considered a basic right by the constitution. This isn't true equality because there are a lot of competent teenagers who are intelligent enough to vote and should be given the right to vote. True equality would be making everything so that as soon as you are capable and mature enough to do something you are able to do it. In my opinion 18 is not a good age of maturity for voting. The minimum voting age should be lowered. Lowering the voting age would help equality and many other problems facing America. It would promote democracy in America, it would also increase the quality of politics which would increase the quality of life and education, lastly it would get more people to vote now and in the future.

Some people might say that teenagers aren't smart and don't have the brainpower to vote and make important decisions for the country. Those people are right, some teenagers are not mature and can be easily influenced

for voting. Some of these teenagers might not even be intelligent enough to vote either. This can certainly be a problem for a democracy if there are unintelligent voters. However, this claim is invalid for a few reasons. Firstly, there are unintelligent adults who vote, and we don't deny them the right to vote, so why are we denying the majority of smart youth the right to vote based off of the ignorance of a small percentage. The second reason this argument is flawed is because even the supreme court, the highest court in America and one of the branches of the federal government considers almost all teenagers intelligent enough to vote. In a youthrights.org article they state this ruling from the supreme court "The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 1971((c)) states that: "any person who has not been adjudged an incompetent and who has completed the sixth grade in any State or territory, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico where instruction is carried on predominantly in the English language, possesses sufficient literacy, comprehension, and intelligence to vote in any election." This quote shows that almost all teenagers are considered by the highest court in the United States competent and intelligent enough to vote. Most graduates of sixth grade are 12 years old, so by the time most teenagers are 13 they would be in either 7th or 8th grade, a grade where they are considered intelligent enough to vote. The argument of teenagers



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not being smart enough to vote is flawed because there are also dumb adults, and the supreme court considers most teenagers competent for voting.

In conclusion, if the voting age in America were to be lowered, there would be an increase in voters, quality of politics life and education, as well as promoting democracy. America would benefit in many ways from teenage voting. Politicians would have to listen to teenagers, teenagers and other students would get better education because they would have more of a say in education. Voter turnout would be increased because there would be more voters and current voters with children would have more motivation to go out to vote. America would be more of an equal nation and live up to our ideals and values a lot better with a lowering in the voting age to 13. More basic rights would be given to a greater majority citizens as well as living up to what founded this nation.

Our True Selves

Amrita Pal

As we grow older, we make our own decisions about the type of person that we would like to present to the world. Many of us seem to have accepted the fact that there are expectations that everyone in our family have to follow, while others feel a sense of being lost, not wanting to be like the others. Being born and brought up in America, has benefits as well as disadvantages for Bengali-Americans. People tend to struggle with the fact that they have multiple identities, and do not know which one to follow. We want to be Americanized, which seems to hide our true selves, as we wear a mask, yet around our family we are completely different. By not acknowledging the

fact that we are from two different cultures, it is changing who we are as people.

In America, the land of the free, immigrants from all around the world come here, for a better life. Within today's society there is so much diversity as we blend together as one, forming a "melting pot". Our parents are the first generation who have successfully established themselves into this country, who are working continuously to make sure that we have exposure to both cultures. Growing up is an experience that is made more difficult and unique when it occurs in a country as diverse as the United States.

In the Bengali culture, many important figures are distinctive by expressing their thoughts on paper, and by talent. Our families in India and in this country constantly have close ties that are shaping us up. In this country Indians festivities bring us together as a community, in which our generations learn to appreciate the rich culture of India. Growing up, we have learnt this native language, in which we are able to converse with others in.

In the 21st century, we are fortunate enough to be a part of both cultures, gaining more experiences. This will eventually guide us in planting our roots into American soil, nourished by our indian culture, for our future generations. The time is now, to spread awareness of how important it is to identify ourselves as not only American but Indian as well, as it has its own benefits to us.

I Keep Working

Kriti Mukherjee

Looking through the shadows
of my room,

I realize the immense demand
for light,

As the clock chimes nine
The demand ignites.

My pen moves in my hand,
As my thoughts circle in my
head.

Without this rush,
My work would not be ahead.

This feeling is unreal
As there is fear and
uncertainty in between,

I do not know what this is
called

But I know it is helping me.

Time does not stop,
It just keeps racing
Without waiting for anyone.

The light never does come,
And the darkness is over-
whelming.

But I do not stop,

I keep working.

My breath is shallow
As my mind is trapped,
I do not know what to do
But to keep working.

My eyelids are heavy,
And a yawn escapes me,
But instead of stopping,

I keep working.

I just keep working.

সমসেট বেঙ্গালি অসোসিয়েশন

Saraswati Puja - January 2018

Officiating Priest: Arkendu Chatterjee

Event Manager: Satabdi Choudhury

Puja Arrangements: Suparna Bakshi, Suparna Das, Lopamudra Das, Hiya Banerjee, Madhumita Banerjee, Arunima Kuila, Indrani Moitra, Doel Ganguly, Sangita Chakrabarty, Sudipta Chatterjee, Priya Nandy, Lopamudra Mukherjee, Ranja Bhattacharya, Chitra Srinivasan

Cultural Committee: Niloy Jana, Chitra Srinivasan, Ranjana Sanyal, Mitushi Banerjee

Food Committee: Anirban Biswas, Manjari Chowdhury, Ashish Das, Sanchoy Das, Parna Kundu, Arindam Kuila, Sumit Sen

Fundraising: Sumita Dhara, Shubrojit Dutta, Niloy Jana, Soumi Jana, Bibhas Mitra

Guest Relations & Registration: Indrajit Ghosh, Rahul Ganguly, Debesh Chakrabarty, Soumendu Bhattacharya, Abhishek Chakrabarty

Facilities Management: Chanchal Banerjee, Joydip Chakraborty, Somesh Choudhury, Surajit Deb, Probir Dhara, Anisur Khan, Bikramaditya Mukherjee, Subrata Roy

Magazine committee: Hiya Banerjee, Mitushi Banerjee, Somdip Datta

Art and Venue Decoration: Ankan Choudhury, Sumita Dhara, Shourabh Mukherji, Ranjana Sanyal

Promotions, Multimedia and Website: Mitushi Banerjee

Diwali Party - November 2017

Event Managers: Chanchal Banerjee, Joydip Chakraborty, Shubrojit Dutta, Bikramaditya Mukherjee

Summer Picnic - June 2017

Event Managers: SBA Team

Thanks to the many volunteers who made these events a success

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Arkendu Chatterjee and Hiya Banerjee

Ashish and Suparna Das

Ashok and Mahua Ganguly

Ashutosh and Sharmistha Dutta

Chanchal and Mitushi Banerjee

Chandrajit and Debi Bhattacharya

Debasish and Anindita Ghosh

Debesh and Sonali Chakraborty

Dibyendu and Sudipta Chatterjee

Indrajit and Malini Ghosh

Joyjit and Parna Kundu

Kris and Chitra Srinivasan

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“Somerset Bengali Association (SBA) was formed to create a platform where people of Bengali heritage can come together to practice and preserve their rich cultural heritage as well as can contribute to the community where they belong in their adopted country.

In the past decade, SBA focused and succeeded on building a strong network and platform to practice, preserve and connect the younger generation with the rich cultural heritage of Bengal. Building on that success, SBA now intends to increase the intensity of its contribution to the community where the members belong. With that in mind, SBA has decided to kickstart the "SBA Cares" initiative.

The SBA board brainstormed ideas, with feedback from the community members, and finally chose the below activities as our first steps:

- Organize events to volunteer at the local Food bank, Senior Citizen houses, and Soup Kitchen
- Organize food/fund drives to donate to local charities. In a country that wastes billions of pounds of food each year- it's almost shocking that anyone in America goes hungry. Yet every day,

there are millions of children and adults who do not get the meals they need to thrive.

- Setup a scholarship fund that will benefit a local educational institution

On December 16th, 2017, 20 adults and 6 kids from our community volunteered at the Community Food Bank of New Jersey at Hillside, NJ. It was a fun day of doing fulfilling and necessary work for an organization that directly helps the most vulnerable in our community. A special shout out to the 7 kids – Abheek, Anisha, Anoushka, Ria, Trina and Trisha who joined us in this activity.

If you want to get involved, here are some upcoming opportunities:

- January 27, 2018: We are organizing a food/fund drive for CFBNJ at our Saraswati Puja event.
- February 2018: We are working with Bridgewater-Raritan Valley High School to setup an annual scholarship fund sponsored by SBA.

We could not have gotten this far and launched this initiative without your participation and support. We are very excited for what this new year has in store for us and we thank you for your energy and enthusiasm. Together we can make SBA even stronger and work with our youth to give back to our community.

Thank you-
Manjari Chowdhury



Dogs, Not Monsters

Abheek Dhara

It all started that day, when I met a dog for the first time. It was the cutest thing: fluffy, small, and filled with energy. The first time I pet the dog, I felt as if there could be nothing better. The dog curled up next to me, resting his head on my lap. I felt happy, thinking that this creature and I were inseparable. That was, until we went outside. At first, I was happy that this poor, lonely animal was finally getting some fresh air. However, the moment his owner opened the door, I noticed something that nobody else seemed to notice; he wasn't attached to a leash. I tried to stop him, but he said that it was normal for the dog to out without a leash. I wasn't so sure, and I was ready to go back inside. Too late. The moment he puts the dog down, the dog morphs from a tiny bundle of joy to a monster with death intentions. Without thinking, my legs carry me far from the area, with the dog at my heels. Frantically, I kept running; across the road, around the tree, until finally, I made it to the door. Faster than I have ever, I shut the door so hard that I was thankful for not losing my fingers. I finally sat down, panting heavier than the dog that was chasing me. I didn't go out since until it was time to leave. I made a vow in my head that I would never, ever befriend a dog, for my own sake.

For a few years, I had been scared of dogs. Big or small, whatever breed the dog was, I was always conscious about what might happen; I could be torn apart, and never be seen again. I could be bitten by a dog with rabies. When other people see a dog smiling, I saw a dog baring its teeth in a warning to back off, or else. I was always disgusted by seeing people cuddling their dogs, always wondering when it was thinking to strike and torture the people that love it. I was always relieved when I visit houses and the dog is locked up in a pen. People are always feeling sorry for the dog, but I feel so happy that the dog doesn't have to control the way I act. The reactions on people's faces when I tell them that I hate dogs surprised me, thinking that everybody should stay away from dogs, though most people say that I shouldn't be scared of a ball of playfulness and joy. Yeah, that's what they think.

Up until one of my friend's birthday parties, I have never broken a vow. That's why I was surprised that out of all the vows I made, this is the one I break. The

first thing I noticed when I walked into their house was their two enormous dogs. I nearly fainted at the thought of being in the same house with one dog, let alone two! My friend noticed and said that they don't bite. Because it was his birthday, I decided to come a little close to the dogs just for his sake. And then, it stared at me. I don't know what happened at that moment, but I thought I saw a sparkle in his eyes. Suddenly, my mind raced, as I looked deeper into his eyes, and didn't see the killing sensation I thought was there, but a playful, loyal spirit that wanted to lick my fright of my face. I smiled, thinking of my fear of dogs. Not any more.

On December 29th, again I met the dog that I had been scared of my whole life, and met him like a new person. I felt great that I had faced my greatest childhood fears. I felt happy. I finally met man's best friend.

Snow Day

Soumyanil Jana

Snow is blowing

Plants are not growing

Evergreens are standing

Flowers are not blooming.

Snow is piling up covering the grass

Everything looks like a ton of white mass!

Babies are screaming, people are shouting

My hands are freezing, and my teeth are shivering!

I still like snow, I like Snow Day

There is no school, and I like to play.

You can join me, if you can

Together we drink hot chocolate and we say "Yay!"



Operation Hurricane in the Atlantic

Prajna Karmaker

“Boy, it sure is hot outside today,” May, my best friend said. “Yeah, I wish I could really get a cool breeze!” I replied. Suddenly, a breeze seemed to pick up and instead of the hot wind we generally feel in the middle of summer, the temperature of the breeze was pretty cold. “Did you feel that?” I asked May. She answered, “Yeah, it’s like you made the wind appear. It’s getting dark, why don’t we go inside for a bit?” “Sure, why not?” I asked. When we went indoors, I offered to get a movie for us to watch. I grabbed the first one in our DVD pile and put into the CD player. The movie was Superwoman and I had no idea we had that movie.

May’s remark made me think about myself while watching the movie. Do I? Do I really possess power which other people do not? After May left, I decided to see if I could conjure up a breeze in the house. “I want a cool breeze,” I said tentatively. I felt some wind, which made me erupt into cheers. Luckily, no one was in front of me in the house to question it, because they would think I was crazy.

The next day, I woke up feeling a slight urgency at going to the supermarket a few blocks down. Recently I joined a new sewing club that meets in the supermarket and I was supposed to be meeting my sewing club members at the food court inside the supermarket. I asked my mom whether she needed any groceries from there and if I could go to get the groceries, as I was already making a trip to the market. She told me that she needed me to be very careful crossing the roads, etc. I hastily ran to the supermarket. Right after I opened the door of the food court, I saw 6 chairs that were occupied by kids around my age and a podium. Other than those people, the food court was empty.

A brown-haired woman was standing on the podium and asked me to have a seat; so I sat down. She said, “Hello everyone. Let me introduce myself. I am Mary and I have the power of thunderstorms. You all possess a weather-related power. My comrades and I possess the same power as you do. But there will be a time when we cannot do our job, which is to make

sure that the weather does not get out of hand. Our job is to prevent natural disasters from occurring, we cannot actually control the weather for more than a small area. You need training for this difficult job. Any inappropriate behavior will get you kicked out of our group. Each kind of weather will go with one private trainer that possesses the same power you have. Clouds with Lana, sunlight with Drake, wind with Sasha, etc.”

I walked to Sasha and introduced myself. She seemed pretty friendly and she told me how different natural disasters formed, so I could begin to understand how to prevent them. Our club members are from different age groups. The under age group members like me would need parental approval which at first I thought I would never be able to get for this type of adventure. Ray, Wendy, and I were the only under-aged members. After hearing the details about the great cause, both Ray’s and my parents agreed to let us go, but Wendy was unlucky and didn’t get approval from her parents.

Next week, I arrived at our meeting place and saw the chairs set up as they were when we originally came. I thought we were going to start working with our trainers, but I guess not. When Mary came up to the podium, I could tell she was really stressed. She said, “Our method of predicting the weather is seeing it in our mind when we control the weather in our immediate surroundings. Unfortunately, our weather forecast for tomorrow is a hurricane.” She paused there to let us absorb the information; many people started murmuring to each other. “We will need all the help we can get to prevent the hurricane. We must do whatever we can. Although on such short notice, we have a 50% chance of succeeding.” And a 50% chance of failing was probably what everyone was thinking. “So let’s get started,” Mary said. Since wind is the most prominent element of weather in a hurricane, Sasha and I had a lot of pressure to prevent it.

After about thirty minutes, everyone discussed their strategies and came up with a solid plan. As no boat driver will agree to drive in such bad weather, we will have to hire a boat in advance. Mary and Sasha are experienced boat drivers with driving licenses, so reaching deeper sea will not be a problem. We would take a boat and go into the Atlantic Ocean, because that is where this hurricane will form. Then when the warm air rises, which Sasha and I will be able to see

with special glasses, we will try to get it come down by reducing air temperature, so it won't unbalance the air pressure. That is Plan A. If that doesn't work then we will try to prevent the surrounding air from speeding up by our special power, which is Plan B. Plan C is that Ray and Lana will break apart the many cumulonimbus clouds needed to make a hurricane.

My mom drove and dropped me off at our meeting place. When I got off, I saw only Mary, Sasha, Ray, and Lana. I guess we were responsible for preventing the disaster. The grown-ups tried to reassure us that if we did not prevent the hurricane, then there were many more things to slow it down or stop it. As planned earlier, Mary hired a boat with occupancy of 10 people one day before the storm day. All of these happenings

just made me even more nervous than before. Besides, we were going to the middle of the Atlantic at night without our parents. As some of us are fairly new members, Mary did not dare to reach the center of the hurricane. We reached within ten miles of the eye of the giant hurricane. All in all the situation was pretty grim and scary. When we got to our destination we put on the glasses and saw the warm air rising. We tried making the air stay in place, but after several tries we gave up Plan A. My hands shook as Sasha and I succeeded in making the surrounding air stay slow. Plan B worked! After some time, we made sure that the hurricane wasn't going to form anytime soon, so we could leave. While we were coming back home, glimmering rays of rising sun assured us a sunny hurricane-free beautiful day.



The Growing Gymnast

Ria Mukherji

Have you ever seen a girl flip? Well, I have and I know how to do it! I started learning gymnastics at age 3. I did my first somersault, then cartwheel, front limber, back walkover and arial. I am self-taught but I follow the gymnastics discipline seriously. People such as my very close friends, neighbors and relatives say that I am very flexible.

I participated in 3 years of gymnastics camp at the YMCA and I have 5 shiny gold medals from camp. I also won hardest worker in group C which is the second highest team in gymnastics camp. My dear friends Mahika and Aditi also know gymnastics and love it just like me! I hope you be a true growing gymnast.





My visit to the Taj Mahal

Nirav Banerjee

“Nirav, wake up today is a really big day!” My mom said as she woke me up.

“What are we doing today?” I replied.

“We are going to see the Taj-Mahal.

“COOL!” I screamed in excitement.

Today, my whole family including my Grandma, Grandpa, and I were in Agra, the city in India where the Taj- Mahal is located. We were visiting India for about 3 weeks. My grandparents live in India. I was on a vacation with them to see the Taj. I could not wait to see the Taj, I had been hearing about it for a very long time, But first we had to eat breakfast. After we finished breakfast, we hopped in a car and drove to the front entrance of the Taj Mahal. I was ecstatic, we were on the verge seeing one of the seven man made WONDERS OF THE WORLD! After we got our tickets, we got on a golf cart and drove to security. Security was really strict for entering. Then we were allowed to enter the venue. We saw the Taj Mahal in all its glory. It was really a beautiful sight. I finally understood why people liked Taj Mahal so much. We took lots and lots of pictures. Anything to capture the Taj in all its glory. We finally got down the stairs and went to where all the benches and four gardens are. In the middle of the four gardens was a bench that we sat on. Our tour guide told us Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber, and Selena

Gomez sat on that same bench not even a month ago. It was just amazing. Also, in the past a lot of celebrities sat on that same bench including Michelle Obama.

We took a tour of the whole Taj- Mahal. There were so many precious stones embedded in the snow white marble. Some stones if you shone a light through, they glowed. There were graves at the base of the building. That made the Taj a tomb instead of the palace I thought it vast. When we were in the Taj- Mahal, we learned a lot of cool facts like the four pillars on the Taj - Mahal are pointed out on a 3* angle so all are visible at the same time and if one of them falls it will not hit the Taj- Mahal. Also that there are wells underneath the Taj- Mahal which supports the heavy marble structure. Our tour guide also cleared the myth about there being a Black Taj Mahal. He did mention a secret tunnel that went from Taj Mahal to Agra fort nearby. The river flowing behind the Taj and its reflection in the river was a very mesmerizing sight. We stayed there about an hour or so before it started getting too sunny and hot. We then went out of the Taj- Mahal and shopped in the small marble store near the entrance. It was a great experience seeing the Taj- Mahal and I would like to visit again.

Do You Need that Plastic Straw?

Ria Mukherjee

On a warm breezy day, you walk along the grainy sand on the shore sipping from the iconic Starbucks straw, then BAM! You see a sea turtle with a bloody nostril and a straw stuck up its nose Although plastic straws are fun, they can cause serious damage to our environment. Plastic straws can harm our environment. Did you know that straws could outweigh the fish in the sea? If people keep using plastic straws, by 2050 plastic straws could literally outweigh the fish in the sea. A recent study shows that there is currently 8,000,000 metro tons in the sea! This is important because fish could be seriously harmed if we keep using plastic straws. If we keep using plastic straws, millions of fish could be killed. Reusable plastic straws are a great alternative because they do not cause harm to our environment and they are easy to carry around and use. If you want to help our environment, then quit using straws today!

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Still You

Aratrika Dey

When the day is done, it's you I think about.
When the night is young, it's you I think about.
When the shadows fall and the ground grows cold
When the wind slaps against my ear folds
When the crowd is wild enough to get lost
When the streets are thick with a layer of frost

When every shade of truth shows a face of lies
When the clouds above gift its rain in my eyes
When grains of sand curl beneath my feet
When I witness a ragged child with a morsel to eat
When the blare of traffic deafens all sound
When a present is sealed and waits to be found
When my room is engulfed in blackness so deep
When I cradle a baby and lull it to sleep

When my fingers trace the pages that spill
the spaces our silences would always fill
When my mind searches in a vision of red
for words left unheard, and those left unsaid
When the skin on my lips ache with thirst,
the memories are what come to me first

Of melodies I've learned to sing and forget,
of steps and turns that lead to regret
The stars I've learned to live without,
It is still you I think about.

Lost Like Never Before

Rashi Roy

Please! Can we go somewhere? We are bored to death!! It's our last day here!" I said, pleading. It was our last day of vacation in Houston. We were visiting our Aunt and Uncle. To be honest, we had fun the past few days so why not have fun today. (P.S. - it was a month before Hurricane Harvey hit.) "Hmm..... let me think about it," mentioned my aunt. There was 5 minutes of silence. It felt like it took them 3 days to make a decision. Finally, they made a decision.

They told us we were going to this new Green Field where there was a bunch of activities. "Yes!" I cheered. I rushed to the car and hopped in. It felt like we were moving like a turtle, but we got there in a few minutes. I was excited. I couldn't sit still, I felt like a balloon ready to burst.

"WOW this place is gigantic," I heard behind me. As we walk closer I could smell that sweet butter of popcorn. It made my taste buds tingle. "Now it's time for rides", my brother added. He was looking at me "Are you ready?". " Okay let's go." I hollered as we started running. We went on awesome rides and so many I couldn't count.

We got so tired we sat on a bench. My uncle and my aunt were sitting on another bench. It was getting dark. "Can we go home?" I asked. But there was no answer. I didn't see my aunt and uncle anywhere. I started to scream. Meanwhile, my aunt and uncle were looking for us. "Where are you?" My aunt called out. She almost had a heart attack. My uncle started sobbing. They asked everybody "Can you help us find my children? Do you know where they are?" Finally, they decided to call the cops. The sun was almost gone.

Finally, I saw a shadow of my uncle and my aunt. As I ran closer..... IT WAS THEM!!! "Where were you? We were looking for you", I cried. Then they told us the story about looking for us and panicking. As we went home we hoped we would never get lost ever again.

Our Best Wishes to SBA

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 India, filled with many vast landscapes
 Such as mountains, rivers, and lakes
 Delicious fruits and vegetables
 And tasty sweets and cakes

All you can hear is hustle and bustle
 In night and day
 Cars here and cars there
 Lots of sound in streets and highways

India's flag
 Orange, white, and green
 Orange on top, green on bottom
 And white in between
 Even though India is very warm
 And there's lots of people
 You'll very soon realize that India is very beautiful

Tearable or Untearable Nipun Banerjee

People are just like paper
 One paper alone is easily tearable
 But when you put many papers together to create a book
 it's almost impossible to tear

A group of people is stronger together than separated
 If people form a group, they are harder to stop
 if they are protesting or petitioning,
 trying to cause change
 They are more effective together
 Just like paper

Yet the individual paper is also important in some ways
 If there is a stack of papers
 and they are all colored white
 Even one purple piece of paper can be noticed

People are the same in this way as well
 If one person stands out from a group of people
 they can be easily noticed,
 whether it be for a good reason

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Saraswati Puja 2018 :

Bridgewater-Raritan Middle School, Bridgewater, NJ

3:30pm	Welcome Announcement	Ranjana Sanyal and Probir Dhara	
3:35pm	Inaugural Song	Aratrika Dey	
3:40pm	President's address and SBA introduction	Satabdi Choudhury and Probir Dhara	
3:50 pm	Children's Dance Drama "Alibaba Challis Chor"	Directed By:	Mitushi Banerjee,
		Assistant Director:	Parna Kundu
		Choreographed By:	Anouska Ghosh, Rupsa Jana,
		Choreography Help:	Dolon Mukherjee, Suchismita Goswami
		Sound Management:	Nipun Banerjee
		Light Management:	Rishi Mukherjee
		Art Direction/Set:	Teesta Roy & Somesh Choudhury
		Props/Stage Mgmt:	Bindiya Banerjee, Sourabh Banerjee
		Wings Management:	Devyani Basu, Doel Ganguly,
		Narration:	Aishani Basu Amrita Pal
		Participants:	
		Aarushi Kuila,	Isha Banerjee, Ria Mukherji,
		Abheek Dhara,	Krish Dutta, Rishi Roy,
		Adi Bhattacharya,	Mahika Maitra, Rohan Dutta,
		Aditi Dhara,	Neil Chowdhury, Rohan Ganguly,
		Aditya Basu,	Nirav Banerjee, Rupsa Jana,
		Alina Mukherjee,	Prajna Karmaker, Shounak Ghosh,
		Amarka Kushary,	Pranita Kundu, Shweta Roy,
		Anshini Biswas,	Priyanka Chatterjee, Siya Majumder,
		Ashmita Ghosh,	Purba Karmekar, Somdeep Nath,
		Ayushi Goswami,	Rashi Roy, Soumita Banerjee,
		Eamon Khan,	Rashmika Majumdar, Soumyanil Jana,
		Hiya Khan,	Ria Mukherjee, Tiasha Chakraborty
4:35pm	Sponsor Announcements	[Gold and Silver Sponsors]	
4:50pm	Anurodher Aasor : SBA Singers presentation	Directed By:	Malini Mazumdar
		Narration:	Atreeye Dey, Prasun Chowdhury
			Jayanta Das,
		Sound Management :	Arindam Kuila
		Light Management:	Bikramaditya Mukherj ee
		Singers:	
		Achintya Pal,	Malini Mazumdar, Satabdi Choudhury,
		Chitra Srinivasan,	Niloy Jana, Subhrojit Dutta,
		Kaushik Dey,	Ratnanjali Dutta, Subhashis Banerjee
		Madhumita Banerjee,	Ranja Bhattacharya,

Cultural Program Schedule

Time: 3:30 pm to 7:35 pm

5:25pm	SBA Recognition Award		
5:35pm	SBA Dance Presentation: "Desh Rangeela"	Choreographed By: Cast: Anjali Bhatia, Anjali Shankar, Archana Mahapatra, Ariyan Tripathy, Arnaz Amin, Charmaine Thomas, Deepa Bhandari, Deepika Rana, Dolon Mukherji, Kalyani Pradeep, Madhusmruti Lenka, Mahasweta Rath,	Deepa Bhandari Malavika Rajeev, Mallika Panda, Maria Martin, Marina Martin, Megha Madhusuden, Mitisha Panda, Namrata Thakur Bhattacharyya, Nitara Menon, Padmaja Upadya, Padmasana Das, Piyali Das, Pooja Das, Praveena Menon, Prisha Das, Riya Sarangi, Ruby Biswal, Sangeeta Kishore, Sangita Chakravarty, Soma Mookherjee, Spreeha Choudhury, Subhashish Tripathy, Suchismita Bagchi, Sumedha Lenka
6:00pm	Raffle Drawing	Gift from sponsors	
6:15 pm	SBA Drama Presentation- "Naughty Binodini" writ- ten by Sudipta Bhawmik	Directed By: Set , Costume Design and Light: Sound Management: Music Advisor: Cast: Anirban Biswas Chanchal Banerjee, Hemanta Bhattacharya, Rana Ray,	Soumendu Bhattacharya Arpana Bhattacharya Atanu Ghosh Jayanta Das Ratna Dutta, Soumendu Bhattacharya, Soumi Jana, Srishti Bose, Suparna Das, Teesta Roy, Tushar Mukhopadhyay,
7:15pm	Closing Remarks	Ranjana Sanyal and Probir Dhara	
8: 30pm	SBA Presents Antakshari- "Taal Se Taal Mila"	Hosted by: Creative Lead: Technical Assistance:	Subhrojit Dutta, Satabdi Choudhury Mitushi Banerjee Arindam Kuila

Alibabā Aār Chōllish Chōr



Abheek, Adi, Aditi, Aditya, Eamon, Hiya, Neil, Nirav, Pranita, Rishi, Rohan D, Rohan G, Rupsa, Shounak, Soumyanil



Aarushi, Amarka, Anshini, Ayushi, Ashmita, Esha, Krish, Prajna, Priyanka, Purba, Rashi, Rashmika, Ria, Ria, Shweta, Siya, Somdeep,



CREW:
Bindiya, Devyani, Doel, Dolon, Mitushi, Parna, Sourabh, Sourav, Suchismita



Aishani, Amrita, Nipun, Rishi



CHOREOGRAPHY:
Anoushka & Rupsa



ART DIRECTION:
Somesh & Teesta

This year has been exceptionally exciting because we were doing such a well known drama. It was tough for the kids because not only was drama in Bengali, it had a lot of Urdu word mixed it. It was fun hearing them try to get their dialogues phonetically correct with their accented voices but things gradually fell into place and soon we had kids mumbling each other lines and humming the songs. The dancers had a tall task this time with over 7 songs. Something we had not attempted before this. But everyone rose to the occasion and the results are before you.

This production would be impossible with the support of all the parents who braved the Artic like weather and snow and ice to drop the kids off at the rehearsal. My drama team parents helped me every step from the prop placement to the wings management. Working with 40 kids is not an easy task but they smiled through it all. A special thanks to Parna Kundu and Devyani Basu for all their help in direction. Our wonderful sets made by Teesta Roy and Somesh Choudhury rivals any rented props we could have got. Their creativity and engineering never ceases to amaze. This year we had some many people help us from India. Devyani's and my parents who went out and got costumes and props. Sayanti and Malini who without the slightest hesitation bore all those purchases back here. Lastly I would like to give a shoutout [I hear that is the latest teen lingo] to my teen choreographers Anoushka and Rupsa who inspite of a grueling high school schedule managed to come up with mesmerizing choreography without which our production would not be as appealing as this. This whole camaraderie is why I keep doing this every single year.

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ANURODHER AASOR...



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Director: Malini Majumdar

Narration: Atreyee Dey, Jayanta Das, Prasun Chowdhury

Sound: Arindam Kuila

There was a time when our family members back home eagerly waited around the radio to listen to their requested favorite songs and also listened to anecdotes. "Anurodher Aasor" became very much a part of their daily routine. Be it a sunny chilly January afternoon or a rainy August evening, the anticipation was a very cherished part of daily life. The popularity of 'Anurodher Aasor' moved from one generation to other establishing a melodious journey in our lives to the world of glorious Bengali and Hindi songs. We can never forget our roots and their love for the songs of yesteryear.

Listening to radio programs and chatting with the hosts have regained their timeless appeal with the advent and popularity of FM Radio. Hence 'Anurodher Aasor' has become eternal. With this in mind, Somerset Bengali Association aims to recreate the atmosphere along with some very special live music renditions from some of the most highly talented musicians in our community. So relax, sit back, and relive the memories!



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देश रंगरङ्ग



Anjali Bhatia, Anjali Shankar, Archana Mahapatra, Ariyan Tripathy, Arnaz Amin, Charmaine Thomas, Deepa Bhandari, Deepika Rana, Dolon Mukherji, Kalyani Pradeep, Madhusmruti Lenka, Mahasweta Rath, Malavika Rajeev, Mallika Panda, Maria Martin, Marina Martin, Megha Madhusuden, Mitisha Panda, Namrata Thakur Bhattacharyya, Nitara Menon, Padmaja Upadya, Padmasana Das, Piyali Das, Pooja Das, Praveena Menon, Prisha Das, Riya Sarangi, Ruby Biswal, Sangeeta Kishore, Sangita Chakravarty, Soma Mookherjee, Spreha Choudhury, Subhashish Tripathy, Suchismita Bagchi, Sumedha Lenka

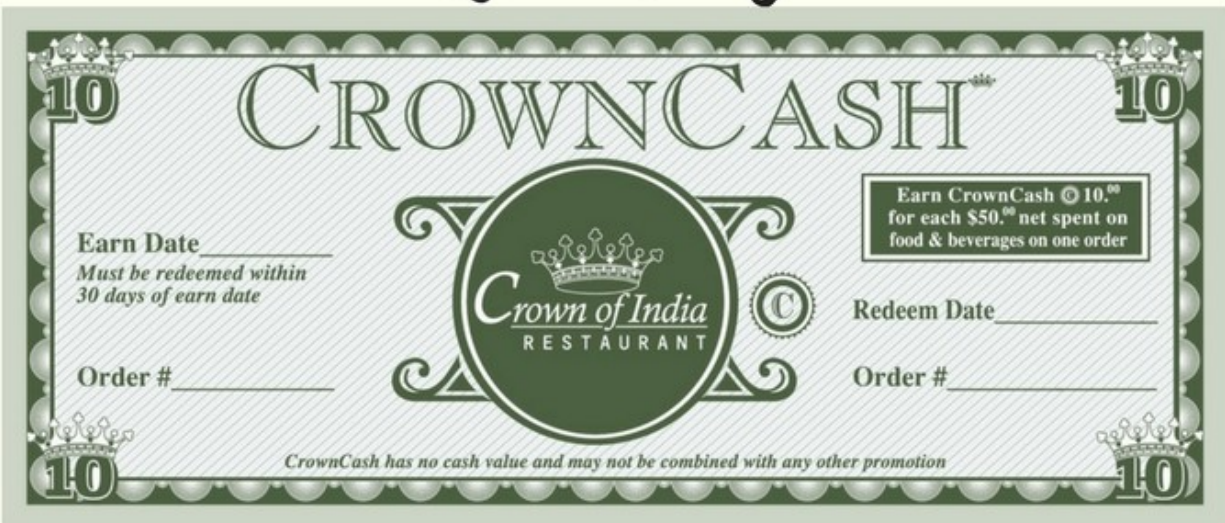
India is visualised as colorful and vibrant by the rest of the world. The dancers of "Desh Rangeela" showcase precisely that, and catch some of those shades and sparkle, and bring to us a few different styles of dance forms through popular folk and film music. The presentation represents some of the 36 beautiful states and union territories of India resplendent with their unique languages, cultures, and ethnicities. We have songs and dances from: Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Bengal followed by the grand finale. The dances for the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan have been choreographed by Praveena Menon.

Concept and choreography: Deepa Bhandari



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NAUGHTY BINODINI

SCRIPT:
SUDIPTA BHOWMIK

DIRECTION:
SOUMENDU BHATTACHARYA



CAST: (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

SOUMEN RANA RAY
KAKOLI SUPARNA DAS
ASHOK TUSHAR MUKHOPADHYAY
SATYAKI ANIRBAN BISWAS
MANOJ CHANCHAL BANERJEE
KHEYALI SOUMI JANA
MONTU SOUMENDU BHATTACHARYA
BENU HEMANTA BHATTACHARYA
MUSICIANS RATNA DUTTA, SRISHTI BOSE
SUNAYANA TEESTA ROY

CREW: ATANU GHOSH (SOUND EXECUTION), ARPANA BHATTACHARYA (SET & COSTUME DESIGN, LIGHT PROJECTION), JAYANTA DAS (MUSIC ADVISOR)



"Naughty" Binodini, written by Sudipta Bhowmik, is a hilarious comedy about a cultural club who wanted to stage a popular jatra-pala Noti Binodini.

Most of the actors in this team are either "first-timers" or relatively new on theater stage. Leading them through to develop a comedy, unarguably one of the most difficult genre of plays to handle, was an interesting challenge for me. But they have pleasantly surprised me with their hard work, dedication and motivation to excel. They have rehearsed with ever-smiling faces at odd and long hours, through a brutal arctic-cold weather. How much have they accomplished? I leave that judgement to our esteemed audience. But do keep coming. I'm certain that they will do better and better each time with your encouragement.



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**Arindam Kuila, Malini Majumdar,
Mitushi Banerjee, Niloy Jana,
Shubrojit Dutta & Soma Choudhury**

This year SBA introduced Antakshari to the endless fun and enjoyment in the evening cultural program. The word is derived from 2 sanskrit words Antya and Akshar meaning end alphabet. Team SBA tried its best to come up with an hour's event comprising of 4 interesting rounds played amongst 7 registered teams namely Sur, Taal, Laya, Ragini, Sargam, Swar and Tarana.

The planning and rehearsals were no less exciting than a drama or dance program. Selecting the right questions while making sure various eras of Bollywood songs were well represented. A very strong technical team successfully sequenced the format and presentation, and the hosts practiced rigorously perfecting the singing to right tune and correct usage of lyrics.

Sit back, relax and get swayed by this must watch program and encourage your team(s) to a stupendous victory. We promise to challenge everyone's repertoire of songs.

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, PLAY ON.

Sudipta Bhawmick **SBA Recognition Award**

Sudipta Bhawmik is a bilingual playwright who writes his plays in Bengali and English and sometimes both. A semiconductor design engineer by profession, Sudipta has received formal training in theatrical arts in Calcutta, India, under the tutelage of legendary theater workers and playwrights like Sombu Mitra, Tripti Mitra, Saoli Mitra, Mohit Chattopadhyay and others.

Sudipta's Bengali plays have been staged all across USA as well as by professional theater companies of India. Several of his plays have been published in prestigious theater journals in India. His plays has been translated to other Indian languages like Hindi and Marathi.

Sudipta is also an actor and director and has staged several plays in and around the New York metropolitan area and New Jersey. He has also performed in Mira Nair's acclaimed film, "The Namesake".

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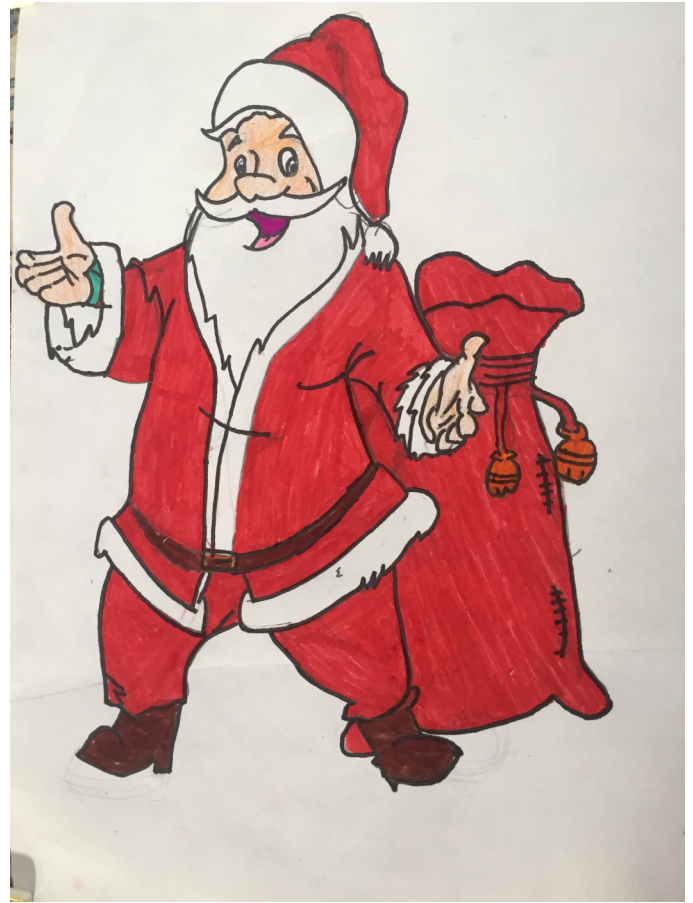
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Zoo by Aayushi



Santa by Aditya Basu



Greenish by Hiya Banerjee



Swan by Anoushka Ghosh



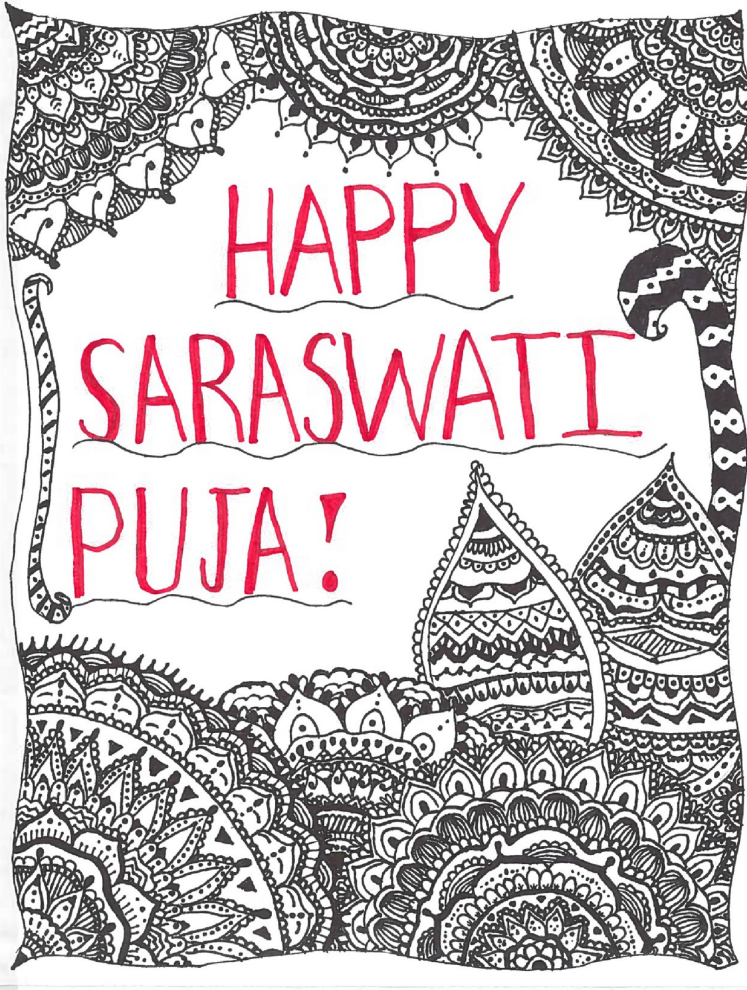
Ganesha by Siya

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Aditi Dhara

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With sadness and fright.

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Until it could see
The first ray of sun
Beam for me.

The winter has past,
The spring has come,
The birds are singing
Flowers have sprung.

The seed once planted
Has grown today
Its leaves have sprouted
Each and every way.

This seed has grown
Into a rose like no other,
It shines through the plains
In the darkest of night.

It is a
Magical Rose.



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How to Cook the Soup of Satisfaction

Rupsa Jana

We all crave the comforting feeling of satisfaction when we dream about reaching our goals. That unique feeling can be compared to having a good night's sleep on softest pillow. Or even a lukewarm, steaming bowl of soup, one of the world's best-known comfort foods. (shown left) Wait, is your mouth already watering and stomach already growling as loudly as it can? Perhaps, I have stimulated your hunger for satisfaction. That's okay because it's a hunger everybody has in our world. And guess what? I have a perfect recipe just for you so you can cook up your satisfaction in no time. Without further ado, let's get to it!

Level: Extremely Advanced (It's okay if you're intimidated by the effort you have to put in to reach the "finish line" of your goal. You just have to be proactive and believe in your potential. :))

Ingredients:

1. A variety of freshly diced self-confidence filled veggies
2. A pint of flavorful patience filled chicken stalk
3. A cup of an aromatic blend of imaginative spices
4. Salt of effort (just the right amount which depends on your "taste" of your personal goal)
5. A cup of cream as soft as a humble heart
6. A handful chunks of meat as tough as your strength and endurance

Utensils:

1. Your pot of life
2. Your ladle of action

Procedure:

1. Pour your patience filled chicken stalk in your pot of life over the stovetop which emits the powerful flame of your conscience and knowledge.
2. Add your freshly diced self-confidence filled veggies and your handful of meat chunks as tough as your strength and endurance to your patience filled chicken stalk.
3. Stir the mixture with your ladle of action. This signifies your primary series of attempts to achieve your goal.
4. Add in your assortment of imaginative spices to the mixture that was perhaps kept in a tight mason jar of your dreams at night, secured from malice.
5. Stir the mixture a little more with your ladle of action symbolizing your secondary series of attempts to achieve your goal.
6. Pour in your cream of humility and gratitude ever so gently and slowly into your mixture.
7. Stir the mixture a little more with your ladle of action as you begin your tertiary series of attempts to achieve your goal. Sometimes when you stir to vigorously due to frustration, some of the soup may spill out of your pot of life. That's okay because everybody experiences a failure or two when they try to achieve their goals. Just trash those contents and keep stirring with resilience.
8. Lastly as you cook your soup, add in pinches of salt representing the effort you put in to achieve your goal.
9. Garnish w/ a few prosperous herbs (NOT OPTIONAL)'n serve. Enjoy your delectable soup of satisfaction!!!

HAHA! I TROLLED YOU SO HARD!!!!

You'll never actually reach Step 9 because **total satisfaction in life is a myth**. Technically, it can never be reached because you'll keep adding the salt of effort to adjust the taste of the soup/ "height" of your achievement. Anyways, keep cookin' your soup!!!

A Dance with the Asphalt faced Devil

Rohan Deb

In theory, the United States of America is a democracy,
Aaaauuuuugh! The end is near! It's all going down!

The alacrity of the world around me collapses like the
Western Roman Empire--

From flat-out to fox-paced, and fox-paced to feline, and
feline to fat cow, and fat cow to flatline.

Road Work? More like Armageddon.

Bladder engorged, stomach rumbling in detestment,
forehead drowning in sweat.

Where are you, Port-a-John?

My brain is foggier than San Francisco after a rain-
storm, My eyes are failing to comprehend my sur-
roundings, I think I'm going into shock, I--

This is too much for me.

Be it your duty to inform my friends I love them, and
that a fatuous traffic jam left me for the devil.

Something is up. A sense of acceleration contaminates
the air. Could it be that we are speeding up?

Erase that letter and burn all copies, immediately!
Hoorah! The gods have blessed us today!

False alarm.

Hold on, we're actually free now-- the world is becom-
ing fatter with momentum!

A behemoth-sized sigh of relief overcomes me as I
emerge from the jam, perplexed upon what on earth
could have evoked it.

The answer pounds me in the face like a lunatic with a
sledgehammer as rage storms into my brain.

Twenty pestiferous construction workers, situated on
their hinds,

Were cackling like hyenas, relaxing like sloths, and
cherishing their time,

Blatantly repudiating the "Road Work" sign.

A Day in Life

Varun Deb

A life cycle is like a day

Earlier, with not a care and so gay

To slowly get dressed into a new phase

And eat your breakfast in a daze

To go outside and enjoy the sun

As well as do things you've never done

At noon, it is the time for lunch

Yet we must work while daylight is still a bunch

As it starts to get darker, let's stop to go inside

In order to relax and unwind our minds all tied

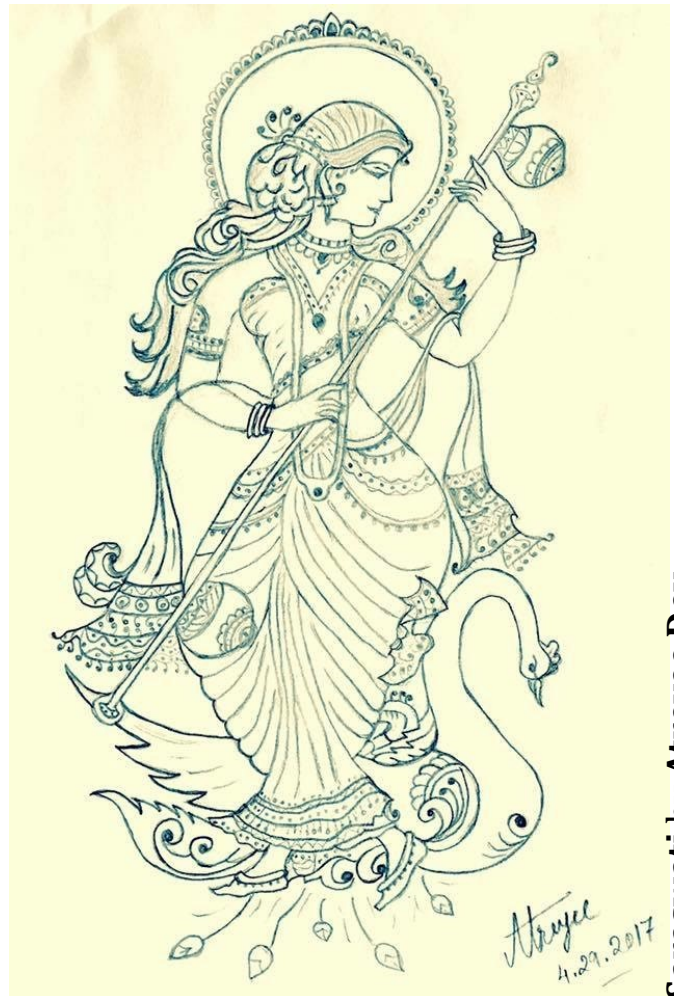
When dinner finally is prepared and served

Being so tired, into our beds we'll have leapt

Only when it's too late would we've realized

That the fun is now over 'cause the day has died.

SO ENJOY EACH DAY!



Saraswati by Atreyee Dey

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