

THE OLIPHANT

No. 160

WELHAM BOYS' SCHOOL

November 24th, 1994

Think About It

Remember you are you! You have your own life to live and if you want to be successful and happy, it is you who has to gain it for yourself.

-- Lord Baden Powell

THE EDITORIAL

At first it was soft, cushioned, comfortable, easy. Illusions of the Editorial chair fit the description. However, reality bites, the illusions fade leaving two thorns in my side. They are pretty big thorns too. The staff representative and the computer designer would do better playing *Shylock* in *The Merchant Of Venice* than doing their present job. They seem intent on taking 'pounds of flesh' off my rear to make the *Oliphant* a success. After where last batch left off, that is not gonna be easy. Even though we performed their last rites, they seem to be coming alive as literary geniuses, or reincarnations of them, to rip our literary efforts to shreds.

Founder's is over at last. It wasn't a very loud occasion as the Principal put it. It was practically silent. An excellent display of exhibitions was put up at the last minute. For the first time we had a patient chief guest who wanted to see all the exhibitions but was being led around by a very impatient bunch of escorts. Being a scientist he had the pleasure of being taught his own subject like a child in an exhibition.

On sports day the boys showed that they could not only march but raise a lot of dust too. The speeches weren't as boring as they usually are. At 89, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees showed that he was still going strong. The Hindi play illustrated not only the acting skills of a few but also their ambitions. During the English play I had the

pleasure of being given a front row seat. Not that I could see very much once it started. Parents darted

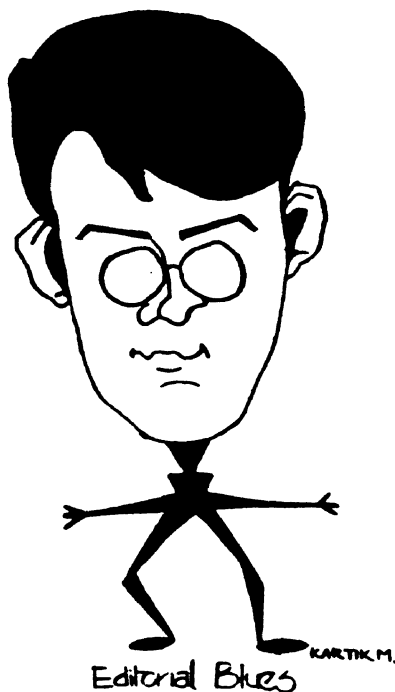
from all corners to the front to take pictures of their children. One father kept stepping on my knee to get to the front. A mother tripped on the carpet and landed flat in front of Mrs.K. (Hero worship in it's truest form).

The ex-Welhamites came back to their alma mater for a little treatment. The doctors told them there was too much blood in their alcohol streams. They were here singing "Yo! Ho, Ho! And a bottle of rum." for almost twenty four hours. They woke up the next morning and demanded a football match. Ankur and I were sent to arrange for goal posts in our night suits much to the amusement of some of the parents. Anyway, they

played between logs and won.

Diwali was quite a squib. Well, it was supposed to be a squib. Unfortunately for the residents of PH there was a lot of dynamite in their lives. Not only in their lives but under their mattresses too. Guys were smoked out of bathrooms and some unfortunates found some very explosive stuff in their laps while performing their daily duties.

School life is as boring as usual. We're back to the grind stone. Teachers seem to be getting unholy pleasure out of giving prep and tests. They seem to have been saving all the assignments for after Founder's and now they're giving out ample amounts of it. The chem lab is as explosive as it used



Editorial Blues

to be, the bio lab is tracing Darwin's missing link and the fizix lab is hovering over the edge of sanity (after what the Chief Guest did to zap them). The most significant change in the Academic block was that there was no bell. Boys were taking advantage and leaving class ten minutes early.

Mr.Kandhari is off on an extended tour, first to Ranchi and then to Calcutta. Everybody is jumping with the opportunity of sending letters home with him. Not because it's free post but it makes him play postman for once.

The new board hasn't been decided as yet. We haven't found replacements for the old 'boards'. The candidates probably don't reach the required level of boardom. We, want the board that does some work for a change. We believe in the Oliphant

going from 'Strength to Strength.'

School went to the polls on Saturday. It is a time when a new prefect body is to be elected. It's a time when everybody votes for the so-called friends and everything goes awry. Everyone seems to be losing their political tempers, some make speeches, some illustrate past and present achievements, some go to the extent of writing "Vote for" on the black boards. The meaning of the word friendship is lost in a bitter back biting battle of licking the right rears. Some people just sit back and make a satire of the political chaos, needling the comedians and praising "the men who would be kings."

Yours for the next twelve issues,
Sudeep Chaudhuri

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed,

This out of the bolt letter is to thank a particular teacher who was instrumental in lifting the grades of lots and lots of class eleven boys in their board examination. Now since the next batch of class ten is on the verge of giving their exams we think we should tell them how we managed to score marks even without studying for them. (We know everybody says that.)

The teacher who we are talking about teaches the mother tongue and believe us, once she teaches any class Hindi, they do not need to study for their exams if they have done her work throughout the year. A lot of us who scored pointers in Hindi, did not study at all before the exams.

Here's to thank maam for all that she's done for us, she certainly deserves all the goodies.

Thank you Maam.

Yours Studiously,
Class XI

There seems to be no answer to that one. Hope they have some sort of an answer before the exams so they can study for the subject they are most likely to fail in.

Yours Infallibly,
Mohit Manchanda.

Dear Ed,

The present class ten seems to be craving for tea and coffee and mid winter night snacks just as we did. In our time we were just about to get all that but the confused house masters remained in that state till the end of term and they were thinking about the whole thing even after our exams were over. Hopefully, they must have arrived at a decision by now. May our juniors get what we did not and may they Eat, Drink and be Merry.

Yours Sympathetically,
Rahul Goenka.

STOP PRESS

Dear Ed,

There seems to be a new rule being introduced for the taking up of commercial mathematics in school. And that rule applies to class eleven exclusively. The rule states that any boy flunking in a maths test in class eleven is supposed to leave maths as a subject. This further specifies in it's application ie., it applies only to the commerce section.

Boys are comtemplating whether the same rule is applicable to other subjects as well. They rightly put up a question that if they flunked in English would they be asked to leave the subject.

This issue of the Oliphant has been unduly delayed due to a myriad of problems ranging from power failures, failures of the computer printers, Bandhs and Chakka Jams. The newly reconstituted Board is conscious of its obligations and responsibilities and will endeavour to ensure that there are atleast two more issues of the school magazine before the term closes. Hopefully, the existing situation will improve and enable the Board to ensure regularity in publication.

WELHAM NOW

Mr. J T M Gibson, our extrustee and the former Principal of Mayo College, Ajmer expired on Sunday, the 23th of October. The Welham community is deeply grieved by the news of his passing away. Our deepest condolences to his bereaved family.

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1. A few boys of classes 11 and 12 went to Mussoorie International School, Mussoorie to watch the play, 'The Ghost Train.' The play and the tea were enjoyed by all.

2. Founder's Day was celebrated with great excitement on the 28th and the 29th of October. However, the enthusiasm was not comparable to last year's due to the postponement of the fete. The chief guest visited all the exhibitions and showed great interest in them. Boys were allowed out on the 30th from 8 o'clock in the morning in casuals.

3. The movie, The Last Boy Scout was screened for the school on Saturday, the 5th of November.

4. Siddhant Sharma represented the Rest of India Basketball team and then to Bokaro, Bihar. The team came fourth.

5. Diwali was a quiet affair this year due to the loss of life in the region. The junior school went for picnics. Some adventurous boys of senior school went for Water Sports accompanied by Mr. Jagjit Singh.

6. The seniors went for night outs with some staff members on Saturday, the 6th of November.

7. The elections for the next prefect body were held on Saturday, 12th of November. Our best wishes to all the scopers and may the most deserving win.

8. Fewer old boys than expected turned up for Founder's. They played a basketball match against the school team (minus Siddhant Sharma, Kirti and Harry) and for a change won. They also played a football match which they won 5-3. Harjyot Singh aka Baggio played exceptionally well and scored three goals.

9. Project evaluation for class ten finished some days back. It brought home the feeling that examination time is approaching fast. There Vivas too are finished.

10. Assembly is back in the open on the Peacock Stage. We can hear the bird-song as also lots of clatter as the bearers clear up the plates adding to the melody of the ever-so-melodious assembly hymn. We can also hear numerous boys cough- The Principal has prescribed throat paint twice a day while the school captain prescribed punishment twice a day.

11. The Oliphant Board has been reshuffled. Sudeep takes over as the new Editor and with a whole lot of new faces entering the board, we sure are in for a lot of infotainment. Akshi and Prashant are the Ringside View correspondents as Abhinav takes over from Gaurav Wahi as the incharge for Welham Now. Mr.Jagjit Singh is incharge of the old boys news.

Excerpts from Prof. M G K Menon's speech on Founder's Day.

I have given many convocation addresses but I always regard it as a greater pleasure to come to a school because there is a sense of excitement in your age group. Looking at the history of Welham one cannot be impressed by the vision of Ms. Oliphant who had a dream but more important was what you see of the dream today; it reminded me of the French scientist Pierre Curie who as you know won the Noble prize along with the great Merie Curie for the discoveries relating to radio activity which led to the whole search concerning the sub structure of matter. When Pierre Curie was asked, "What is the motto of your life?", he said, "To make of life a dream and to turn that dream into reality." And that exactly what Ms. Oliphant has done. She had a dream but it is today a reality of the school that you see around in which all of you are priviledged to live together, to study to become men.

Was I like you in school doing essentially the sort of thing you are doing? My mind goes back over many things that had happened precisely over that period of half a century.

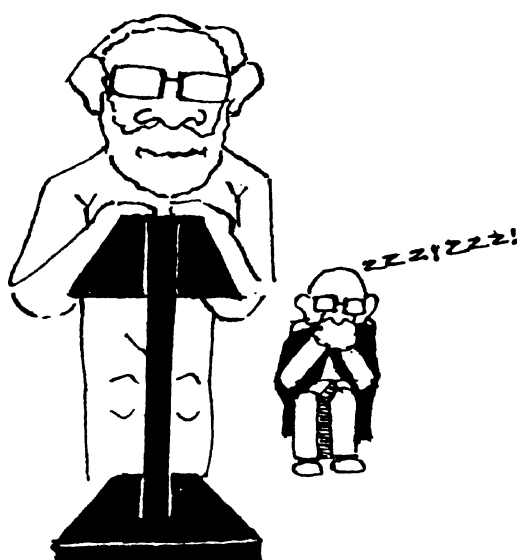
In my days we did not have automobiles, there was no telephone, there was no aeroplane and there was no atomic bomb. And all of us, here, who belong to that generation, will know the transformation that has taken place in the last fifty years. I can still vividly recall 1945 doing my B.Sc., when I heard about the dropping of the first atomic bombs in Japan. I can still recall reading about the inventions of the transistor which put practically all of the valve based electronics into the museums, and from that one discovery was born a whole science and technology of micro electronics which has made possible the computer revolution. Everything based on solid state electronics, went through the small scale, medium scale, large scale, giant scale integration. From the transistor of 1947 we today have a million transistors in a tiny chip much smaller than your finger-nail that has made it possible to do so much with satellites. Today, one of the questions I was asked at tea, "Will computers move along to become

independent entities, self organising systems with their own capacity to think and to do things on their own as we do?" These are fundamentals questions. As yet we don't even understand how our own brain works. I can still recall being in England, just having finished a Ph.D when I saw the historic landmark paper which will go down in the history of science in the same category as the great paper of Einstein on relativity, of Watson and Crick or the double helical structure of DNA. Today we know that to be the basic feature of all life, the whole science of genetics has been transformed, and there will come a time in the next century when a very large number of diseases but all conditions which may lead to diseases.

I remember 1957 when the first Sputnik went up and thereafter the spectrum of launches of satellites of man landing first in 1969 on the moon or seeing last year those spectacular pictures taken by deep space probes of our planets as they skim the surface of the planets and look down on it as we might do on Earth from a helicopter and only recently looking at the way in which comet Shumacher Levy in a series of pieces like a marvellous pearl necklace spread out in the sky impacted on planet Jupiter. Each one of them, impacting on Jupiter with an energy released far greater than anything we would be able to do with all

of the hydrogen bombs that we put together, 200 megatons impacts.

I am very glad to see in the history of WBS and in the statement made by Principal Kandhari, that the aim of the school continues to remain what it has been from the beginning : To make of each individual a complete man. Because I do believe that it is not excellence in a narrow technical professional sense but it is the excellence of the whole human being that ultimately matters. If you ask me what is a person like Mahatma Gandhi that one could characterise, it wasn't a matter relating to his education, and class and rank or professional competence but it was something that was deep within him, values which have come down from the distant past but through which he motivated his country. We need



value systems of that nature not only to revitalise our society imbue it with a sense of elan and confidence, but to make life truly worthwhile.

I was talking to some of the boys today to find out what it is that all of you would be doing as you emerge from Welham and go into life. I was told that most want to do B.Com., Accountancy, MBA, Management. Because that is the pathway of money. Certain number want to do science because all these spectacular developments in science, the great excitement, the great opportunity to make discoveries, and only a very very few want to go into humanities. One tends to forget that his balance is inappropriate. I do believe that we must look not only at the question of making money, one must look at human creativity at its greatest - Who will be remembered 500 years from now. Yes, we remember Archimedes and his one word Eureka. We remember Leonardo Da Vinci, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, the Raman effect and the name of S.N. Bose but not the vast numbers who may make crores legally or illegally. I do believe it is important to remember that money is not all. Mahatma Gandhi

had none. I want to emphasise, along with values, the great importance of creativity, of trying to find from within yourself the mainsprings of creativity.

I was asked by those who produce your Oliphant, about what I was most interested in when I was your age and I said that I had read very little science then, other than school science. But I had read Abbott's life of Napoleon, The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, all of Walter Scott and Charles Dickens, and much more of that type; I went into science later. But I was interested in literature, history, I was interested in medicine. Therefore what I would really like to say, please remember that life is far-far more in the ultimate satisfaction that it gives you than just a job, than just money, it is ultimately what you yourself derive satisfaction from. From within, arising from values, creativity and being a complete human being.

I would like to wish you all the very best as you move from the school into life and I hope that something of what I have said will remain with you when you search your hearts in what you want to be. God Bless You.

Excerpts from the Principal's Founder's Day Speech

Prof. Menon is an eminent physicist with almost impressive array of awards including the Padma Vibhushan, with nearly four decades of work behind him; former member of the Planning Commission, minister of state, scientific advisor of the Govt. of India, etc. He has made a permanent imprint of science teaching in India and elsewhere. We hope that his being an M P will further the cause of science education.

My constant theme in my Founder's day speech is to emphasize the main goal of the school - The striving to make our students "A whole man" and you, Sir exemplify that goal. Prof. Menon is not merely an intellectual, an able administrator and a writer especially in the field of physics, on the boards of various companies but also a keen birdwatcher and photographer.

Today we commemorate our Founders - Hersilia Susie Oliphant and her mother. At the age of 53 when most people are contemplating retirement she embarked on a tumultuous sea - launching a boys preparatory school. She was helped by her mother by a donation of 1000⁴ pounds as she was very short of funds. Ms. Oliphant started the school in 1937 in a rented building, the White house - The junior school block. Later she rented Bethany which is now our dining hall. In 1956, she formed a trust and transferred all her properties to it. Her one ambition that remained unfulfilled was to purchase

all the rented property. I am sorry to inform you that though we managed to buy the other properties, at present one building - The first home of the school remains rented.

The original trust was formed of eminent Dehra Dun residents - Gen. Rudra, Mr. J A K Martyn, Mr. C R Ranganathan, Sir Edmund Gibson, Mr. K S Srivastava and Mr. J T M Gibson and am sorry to inform you that Mr. Gibson, the last surviving of our original trustees died last Sunday.

Successor Principals did not just rest in the solid foundation that they have inherited but moved From Strength to Strength. Thus in 1987 we completed our transformation from a prep school to a fully fledged secondary school. I am sure Ms. Oliphant must be proud of what her successors have achieved.

The current unrest, the agitation and consequent interruption that has occurred in the education of students is a far cry from the peace and the single minded focus on schooling of her days.

Thus when we should have been busy learning and helping the learning process, we were in a rather stressful situation. It is appropriate that here I acknowledge with gratitude the considerable help given by two local parents -- I will not embarrass them by giving their names. Other parents and well wishers gave us a lot of moral support and encouragement in these difficult times. The plague

strengthened my resolve to try and keep out students in healthy Dehra Dun rather than send them back home. In this resolve I was greatly assisted by the initiative taken by our Bursar, Mr. J K Sharma, in managing to get supplies etc., my thanks also to the caterer who managed to cope with erratic deliveries and feed us and that too, with a better cuisine than what most of Dehra Dun was getting! The cooks too managed most manfully, cooking out in the open with no cooking gas. It was fortunate, therefore that we have started our cooking with steam.

The staff and boys too, had to continue their pursuits in somewhat difficult conditions. I would like to express publicly my appreciation to those members of the staff and boys who managed to work cheerfully and to take things as they came manfully.

I pray and hope, somewhat forlornly, that these events will not be repeated. For, schools are a soft target for any group of so called leaders who can call for schools to be shut. Education, we are often reminded is a preparation to face an adult world and so to follow the standards of society. If that is true, pray in such conditions where do we so called educators stand?

The basic tenet of the public schools ethos in which I strongly believe is, in the words of Arthur Foot : The equality of boys as far as their school life is concerned and the necessity of rigidly excluding any attention to their birth or the eminence of their parents must be maintained as a basic principle ; that anything which may result in a boy acquiring more expensive habits than he has at home must be eschewed. ' Alas, many members of our community do not really subscribe to these principles and so we have another class between the expressed and actual values of society.

But one value that is both expressed and actually is that of MARKS. This has been particularly so during the recent period when so many members of the Welham Community and of course of the other schools asked : " Will the course be completed ? Will my ward's marks in the board exams be affected ? " I do most sincerely hope that this will not happen.

If it is any consolation, I must let you know

that in a study conducted by the US National Association of Secondary School Principals it was found, " A student's predictable success in life after school is not the rank in class nor his average marks but the degree of involvement in co-curricular activities. " We, at Welham, have a fair number of facilities for a variety of pursuits. My printed report will give you some idea of the facilities we have. Although many boys make good use of them, I am afraid many do not --- specially the older ones. I have just mentioned to you the death of Mr. Gibson - let me read out to you an appropriate extract from the letter he wrote to parents some years ago : " There is all this activity and opportunity, but I do not think that as yet there are enough boys who excel at these activities. Much of the work done, I have found, when I have looked into it, to be slipshod over details. I would rather that a boy became a really

good carpenter or a skilled musician, that he should be an indifferent performer at too many things, and I feel that parents must not expect their boys to do everything we encourage here, and that they can, by encouragement or criticism and interest in what boys bring home, help them to attain higher standards. If you, in your conversation with your sons at home, can help to awaken their critical faculties, to get them to notice things about them and to think whether they are satisfactory or not, it will help greatly. Another way in which I wish to enlist your help is in guiding the reading of your boys into

wider and deeper channels. I find that quite a few boys are more interested in reading comics than anything else. With the school library full of splendid books more easily accessible than many of the boys may ever find books again, this seems to me a disaster. I do not believe that reading with a studious determination to increase one's general knowledge is the right approach to reading, which should be a pleasure, and the problem is how to turn what some boys think will be a bore into an enjoyment, and how to train their taste so that they can appreciate more subtle humour. "

This year we have an expanded team in our LRC, so it has made much progress and has become a more attractive and stimulating place. Our other



centre, the Activity Centre, is well used. I am glad to tell you that it is not often employed for inflicting speeches on the boys as I am doing now! We have our daily Assembly here, plays, debates, quiz contests, Badminton, Basketball etc. We also have, as you must have seen, an excellent physical conditioning gym which has been fitted up with donations from our parents in Nepal.

The full effective use of our class rooms, labs, playing grounds etc. depends upon the enthusiasm, the ability of the staff and the support given to them by the administration. I am glad therefore that our Chairman, Mr.Dharma Vira and the Board of Trustees are constantly striving to improve their lot. The Board has recently conducted an exercise to expand and improve staff facilities beginning with housing. Once that is over, perhaps we will go co-ed. Towards this goal we are hoping that we will be able to retain some of the planned increase in fees for campus development. Which in 1995 will be Rs.27,500 per annum compared to Welham Girls' present fees of 29,110!

The staff, are of great interest to all of us. I would like to welcome Ms.Blair Davies who is on exchange from Wales, Ms.Monika Khanna and Ashish Sharma. I am happy to report that both Blair and Monika have already made an impact not only in their respective academic spheres but in the field of

drama.

One departure was that of Ms.Sonia Gaur who left after having worked for over 8 years. Her father taught me when I was at Welham and I think his must have been the longest stint as a teacher here- from 1938 to 1975.

Before I request Prof.Menon to address us, I would like to read out one of our assembly prayers: " Lord, behold our family here assembled. We thank Thee for the place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day; for the hope with which we expect the morrow; for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful. Let peace abound in all our company, purge out of every heart the lurking grudge; give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Offenders ourselves, give us the grace to accept and forgive offenders.

Forgetful ourselves, help us to bear cheerfully the forgetfulness of others.

Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind; spare to us friends, soften to us our enemies. Give us strength to encounter that which is to come that we may be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another."

LITERARY AFFAIRS

This is a letter written by an army officer to his friend's mother telling her that her son has been killed in the war.

West Border Post,
13th Regiment,
Yugoslvia.
10th May, 1935

Dear Aunty,

All is well here. The war will be over in a few days. Then we all shall return home. Franz has been admitted to the hospital. He will be discharged in a few days.

Aunty, life has to end as death is sure. It is the body that dies, not the soul. It only changes the body as we change old clothes with new ones. God always calls the brave men near him. He is the life giver as well as the life taker. Fate, no one can change.

So, with great sorrow in my heart, I say that Franz is dead. I agree that earlier in the letter, I have mentioned about him as alive but I could not repeat the lie. Great fighters like him will always be remembered and his name will be written in Golden letters in the pages of History and people shall remember his

sacrifice and his name shall remain alive in our hearts.

As James Shirley had said : ' Oh mighty warriors, the crowns of victory, honour, power and glory will fade away from your forehead. Your head must bow down and come into a cold grave. For only the noble and virtuous actions of men survive. Only they are remembered after death.'

Yours sincerely,

E M Remarque.

**-Amrut Kar
Class VIII**

THE MERCENARY

He was tall. Surprisingly, not thin. Pretty well built. Not muscular, not fat. Wide shoulders, wide waist. Well proportioned. Rectangular face, fleshy cheeks. Rosy, freckled cheeks. Small ears. Black eyes. Wide smile, horrid laugh. Combed black hair. Oily black hair. Ate more than he needed.

Sitting there he wasn't a force to contend with. Life had been good so far. Good for one, but he

was ruining it.

Switched sides fast. A man of moment.
Made friends to forward his success. Pseudo, in many ways. Satisfied, one bitched to another. Didn't practice what he preached. Needled others needlessly. Drank when it was hot. Dropped it when it wasn't. Couldn't wait for anything to simmer. Lived on borrowed knowledge. Not only lived, thrived. Bitched his way forward. Became friendly to gain access. Sporty, yes. With spirit, yes. But still unlikeable. Nice person, in no way. As a facade, perfect. Spoke when not spoken to. Basked not in his own but others glory. Funny, no. Stupid, very.

Took advantage of friends, family. Lied to close ones. Untrustworthy, lacked courage. Filled with cowardice. Always supported the stronger. Friend, not genuinely, ambitiously. Lacked manners. Self proclaimed protagonist, slimy. Green, horrible, disguised fungus. Clung like a mould. Spread like cancer.

Polluted character. Devoid of personality. Outworldly full and worldly hollow. In other words, "Not a nice man to know."

-The Peace Frog

AUTUMN

October leaves are floating down,
Copper, gold, rust and brown.
Autumn prevails in her gusset gown,
Peace enveloping the woods.
Like the calm after a violent storm.
Birds twittering a symphony,
In the rosy dawn.
The morning air is misty,
Blue clouds are streaked with clouds so wispy.
Sunshine filtering through the trees,
Filling everyone's life with radiance,
Washing away sorrow and misery.
I look from my classroom window
How very beautiful Autumn looks.

**- Debashish Bannerjee
Class VIII**

SHE

She walks slowly, past the trees,
Into the woods, in the cold breeze.
She turns around, I look into her eyes,
Where a deep sea of love lies.
Each sound she makes reaches my ears,
Was that the rustling of the leaves,
Or the sound of her movement?
Was this the smell of her body,
Or just a gush of wind?
She is the jewel of my eye,
Across the seven seas would walk she and I.
I love the way she walks,
She is attached to me, like a banana to its skin.
I pity her, lonely with no family,
I am the only human she stays with happily.
She has hair, long and soft and silky,
She has it on her face, hand and legs and all over her body.
O how cute she is.
My three month puppy, Diana.

**-Vivek Sharma
Class IX**

GHOSTS

I wonder why these ghosts so tall but lean
and thin, are believed to be spooky, dancing in the
bright moonlight. They meet together and eat together
but never share a thing.

If they see a human, they'll chase him away
with a scream, you never know what one can be-
good, bad, or mean. The good ones will help the
others while the bad ones will poke their nose,
although they smell bad and not good like the rose.

A week ago I met a ghost and then I did ask
him, "Say, Mr.Ghost, how do you do?" But to only
receive a "Boo, Boo!" Other day I asked a cute
small ghost, "Say, how are you today?" "As
pleasant as moon, as bright as day."

**-Sahil Vohra
Class V**

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