

# A PENCIL

**TAJREEAN HABIB**

It's a lifeless structure  
It strives all day,  
We write with it as if it's an adventure.  
It bears all the pain and does not dare to say,  
How exhausted it may feel?  
It doesn't make a blunder unless we do.  
Its sinew of creativity is as brawny as steel.  
To writing life it's more than worthy and new  
It always stays unflinching.  
But it has been stated  
As the most imperative, an element that is anchoring  
The creativity and way of writing in life.  
Even though it's made of wood and lead,  
In life it brings inspiration, no strife  
It's life's writing seed.

*The writer is an AS student at SFX Green Herald International School*



PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

# The Umbrella Woman

**SYEDA ERUM NOOR**

As she turned to leave the cafe, with a bag slung over her shoulders, her eyes fell on a notebook left on the table beside her.

Picking it up, she chased after a man who had just walked out of the cafe. She recognised the black hat he had on. Her eyes searched the sea of people for its rightful owner but he was nowhere to be found.

*She would stay around here, in case he came back for it. She decided. What harm would a few moments do?*

Finding an empty bench, she slid onto it, turning the notebook over in her hands. It was made of a dark, rich, brown leather that wrapped around it. It was etched with pen markings in places, the edges were worn out. Colored papers stuck out from inside the pages, with unintelligible words scribbled onto them. Curious, Kara, flipped open the notebook, unable to stop herself.

She ran her fingers over the words that sat on the pages, among the sketches here and there. The handwriting was angry, as if the hand that crafted it, flew across the page in a fit of rage, the hand trying to keep up with the shooting thoughts that the words were born from. There were notes on various things; overheard conversations, unfinished poetry, descriptions of a particularly gloomy day, letters of hate and letters of love. For a moment, she felt almost guilty. As if she were looking through something she wasn't supposed to. However, despite her now shrinking conscience telling her to stop, she just had to go on. Now and then, there sat a rough sketch usually in the context of the words that surrounded it. In one stood a woman holding an umbrella. She had a dress that was drenched from the ends, wrapping around her like a wilt-

ed flower. Her hands clutched the umbrella and she had a look of distress on her face. Around her sat words of despair. Words that made Kara feel like there was no woman who was lonelier on the planet. The next page she landed on was a journal entry. The scribbly handwriting was hard to make out, but they told her of feelings that quite honestly, felt much too intimate for her to read. Yet, she read on. The words spoke of a man as if the writer were narrating his own life, talking of his feelings like they weren't his own. But something in the heartfelt sadness and rage told her it couldn't possibly be anyone else. His words cast a spell on her making her want more.

All the pages were painted from a place of desperation, words put onto a page as if to get away from them. As if the one writing it were haunted by the overwhelming amount of emotions he carried. Oftentimes, his words carried regret. Of things he had done and words, he had said. Of unfulfilled wishes, asking to take them back. The disparity in the way that he was. Letters addressed to himself. Speaking of vile, horrible things about oneself. But the ones of love, painted pictures of people that no other words could have done. It warmed her heart.

"Excuse me," said a man making her shoot up from the bench as if she had been caught committing some sort of crime.

"Yes?" She responded, in a voice much too high, her heart thudding rapidly against her chest.

However, seemingly unaffected by her behavior, he smiled. "That's my notebook."

*Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious and has no sense of time. Send help at erum.noor1998@gmail.com*

