





Next to Mankind



***MAA - A collection of winning stories on Mother***

***Authored by: Winners of Metaphor Online Story Writing Competition by  
Arty Hearty Retreats & Hope Society Noida***

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## Cover Page

By Atharva Keswani (Class XI, Bal Bharti Public School, Ganagram Marg, New Delhi)  
- First Prize Winner Eso He Boisakh Art Competition by Arty Hearty Retreats

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By Vedika Keswani (Class VI, Bal Bharti Public School, Ganagram Marg, New Delhi) -  
Second Prize Winner Eso He Boisakh Art Competition by Arty Hearty Retreats

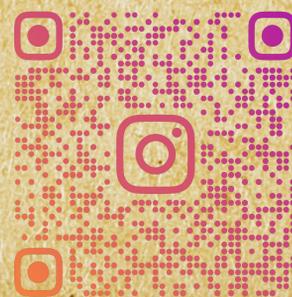


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ARTYHEARTYRETREATS

# Founder's Foreword

*As the Founder of Hope Society – Next to Mankind and Arty Hearty Retreats, it fills my heart with quiet joy to introduce our first-ever eBook, Metaphor — a creative collaboration born of a simple dream: to bring hearts back to the gentle rhythm of pen and paper, to let ink once again trace the contours of emotion, memory, and meaning. What began as an online short story competition on June 9, 2025, around the eternal theme of Maa/Mother, soon grew into a chorus of voices that transcended age and geography. Each story became a prayer, a remembrance, a reflection — an offering of love to the first word we all ever knew: Mother. From hundreds of heartfelt submissions emerged these luminous voices — the winners of Metaphor — whose words resonated with honesty, warmth, and the quiet power of truth. Each story feels like a heartbeat, each line a whisper of the unsaid, echoing the universality of a mother's embrace. Together, they celebrate motherhood in all its hues — gentle, fierce, nurturing, and wise — reminding us that a mother's love is the metaphor through which we first learn to feel.*

*My deepest gratitude to our jury members for their care, patience, and compassion in reading every story. Evaluating children's work is never about comparison; it is about honouring imagination and the courage to express.*

*My heartfelt thanks to Ms. Smitha Raman, whose journey from participant to mentor mirrors the very essence of Arty Hearty — passionate, generous, and inspiring. This ebook you are reading is her idea. At Arty Hearty, creativity is a living circle — each competition, each story, each young dreamer keeps its flame alive. The cover and closing pages, designed by the talented siblings Atharv and Vedika Keswani, winners of our Eso He Boisakh art competition, beautifully embody this spirit of collaboration and continuity.*



# Founder's Foreword

*To every writer who poured their heart into Metaphor — thank you. You have not merely written stories; you have written emotion. And to every reader who now turns these pages — may you pause, feel, and rediscover the quiet magic of words to heal, connect, and inspire.*



*Keep creating, Keep feeling and Stay Arty Hearty!*

*Neeraj*

Neeraj Kr. Jaiswal

Founder, Director & Identity Head  
Hope Society & Arty Hearty Retreats



# Editor's Echo

*Arty Hearty Retreats and Hope Society are thrilled to present our first-ever eBook Metaphor—a celebration of the winners of our online short story competition by the same title, centered on the timeless theme Maa / Mother and held on June 9, 2025. Metaphor celebrates curiosity and creativity and is a vibrant tapestry of winning stories from both young and adult writers across India who participated in and won the competition.*

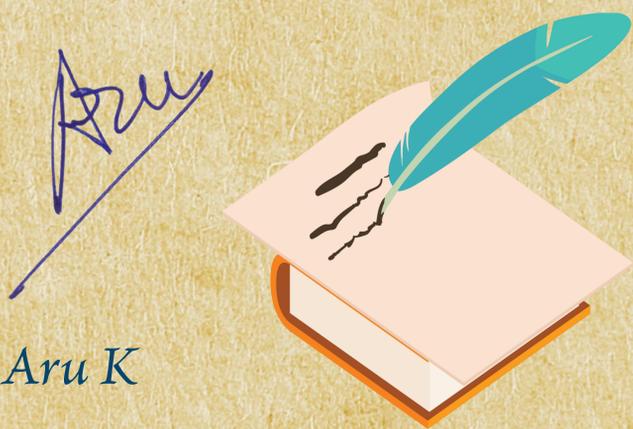
*Each tale captures the many facets of motherhood—some take you down memory lane, others charm with wit and quirk, while many reflect a mother's role in shaping values or evoke deep, heartfelt emotions. Yet, at the heart of every story lies one universal emotion: Mother's love. Metaphor is more than a collection of stories — it is an ode to budding wordsmiths, a spark for curiosity, and an invitation for writers and readers of all ages to write, reflect, and engage in creative thinking in today's tech-driven world. It honors our young authors' dedication and encourages every aspiring writer to keep exploring the power of the pen.*

*At Arty Hearty, we turn talent into opportunity, creativity into collaboration, and winners into inspiration. The cover and closing pages have been created by the exceptionally talented siblings Atharv Keswani and Vedika Keswani, students of Class XI and Class VI of Bal Bharti School, Gangaram Marg, New Delhi and the winners of Arty Hearty's Eso He Boisakh online art competition organised on April 13, 2025 to celebrate Baisakhi. Their contribution reflects Arty Hearty's mission: to identify, nurture, and celebrate talent by creating platforms that encourage creativity across art, music and literature. We are deeply grateful to them and their parents for making time amidst their busy schedules of academics and extracurriculars.*

*This is how Arty Hearty spots, nurtures, and celebrates talent. By involving winners of one competition in another, fueling creativity, inspiring collaborations, and keeping the spark of imagination alive. Arty Hearty Retreats began with a vision: to unite creative souls and ignite the sparks of imagination through travel, art, music, and literature. With this eBook, we are proud to see that vision come alive, as our community of creators continues to grow, inspire, and create.*

*We thank our young authors, and remind all—writing is a journey, not a competition, and every word matters so keep writing, because your words carry a spark no screen can replace.*

*Keep Creating & Stay Arty Hearty*



*Aru K*

*Editor in Chief  
Arty Hearty Retreats*



# Hearts We Thank

*Every creation is a prayer — a quiet offering of gratitude to the divine rhythm that moves through all hearts. Each creation is born not from one mind, but from many hearts beating in harmony. Metaphor is thus a collective rhythm of inspiration, effort, and love. As we bring this eBook to life, our hearts overflow with gratitude for those who have walked beside us, believed in us, and shaped this journey with their wisdom, creativity, and kindness.*

## ***To the One Who Began the Journey***

*Our deepest gratitude to Neeraj Bhaiya, (Neeraj Kr. Jaiswal) the visionary who planted the seed of Hope Society nearly two decades ago, a seed that has since grown into a tree of compassion, creativity, and renewed purpose for many. Bhaiya, your vision, to be a ray of hope for those in need, continues to guide and inspire us. Arty Hearty Retreats was born from that same light, carrying forward your belief that art can heal, unite, and awaken the joy of living. This first eBook, Metaphor, stands as a humble offering to your faith, a reflection of your constant guidance, steadfast emotional and economic support, and your unshakable belief in the transformative power of art and compassion. You have taught us that to create is to give, and to give is to live with purpose.*

## ***Arty Hearty Creators' Collective (The creative pulse that keeps our vision alive)***

*Artist Shashi Kumar Paul, Late. Artist Partha Bhattacharjee, Artist Subhra K. Banerjee, Artist Sharad Bhardwaj — The Blue Painter of India, Artist Maneesh Kumar Aggarwal, Artist Durba, Artist Shayani Dasgupta, passionate beginner artist Sharmila Sen Poddar, form the core energy of Arty Hearty Retreats. Between exhibitions, art shows, and their own masterpieces, they continue to nurture young minds and creative souls of Arty Hearty with unmatched generosity and grace. Each of them carries a world of imagination and shares it selflessly, keeping the light of art, mentorship, and passion burning bright. They are not just our artistic pillars, but the soul of Arty Hearty, transforming it from a vision into a living, breathing movement of creativity and connection.*



# Hearts We Thank

## ***Ms. Smitha Raman (The inspiration we all look up to)***

*A veteran educator who has dedicated her life to nurturing young minds at one of Delhi-NCR's most prestigious institutions, Ms. Smitha Raman continues to inspire us every day with her zest for life and learning. From mentoring children in IT and software to guiding adults in life skills and values, she embodies the spirit of lifelong learning. Whether it's watching a flower bloom, planting trees, celebrating festivals, or creating mandalas, she finds joy in every moment and meaning in every act. Her love for art, nature, heritage, travel, writing and mindful living makes her not just a mentor, but a way of life we aspire to emulate.*

## ***Bizhawkz IT Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (The digital pillar of Arty Hearty Retreats)***

*From day one, the Bizhawkz team has been the invisible powerful force turning ideas into experiences. Their commitment, precision, and creativity ensure that every Arty Hearty initiative finds its voice and place in the world. In an age defined by technology, they bring not just technical expertise but also heart, patience, and belief in our vision. They are the bridge between travels and stories, creativity and audience, thoughts and expressions, transforming our creative dreams into digital realities that reach and inspire hearts across the globe.*

## ***Frozen Woods Resort (The Himalayan abode of Arty Hearty Retreats)***

*A space where dreams breathe and creativity finds peace. From inception to every gathering since, Manoj Jain and Madhulata Jain have stood beside us as kindred spirits who share this vision as their own. Their warmth, generosity, and unshakable support have turned Frozen Woods into more than a retreat — it is our creative sanctuary. For the Arty Hearty family, Manoj Bhaiya and Madhu Bhabhi are not collaborators but fellow dreamers, nurturing this journey with heart and harmony. Heartfelt thanks to Rohit from Frozen Woods for always being there, the dependable hand behind every big and small task.*



*And last but not the least, to all who have shared their light through art, words, guidance, and faith, this work, this ebook *Metaphor*, is as much yours as it is ours. Like rivers merging into the ocean, each mind, each gesture, each word has shaped this work with grace.*

*To those who have walked beside us — guiding, nurturing, believing — we offer our deepest thanks.*

*May our hearts remain united in purpose, and may this shared creation continue to echo the ancient wisdom of Rig Veda (10.191.2)*

*Sam̐ gaccha-dhvaṃ sam̐ vada-dhvaṃ sam̐ vo manāṃsi jānatām |  
Devā bhāgaṃ yathā pūrve sam̐jānānā upāsate ||*

***“Let us move together, let us speak together, let our minds be one.”***

# Childish Consolation

Saumya Sharma

First Prize (11-17 yrs)



*Once, while I was just joking around with my mother, I mentioned that in two years I too would be off to college like my older sister, so she should pamper me while she can.*

*Her smile dropped a little, and she asked me in a low voice “And then what would I do?”*

*Usually I would’ve laughed it off, but this question made me halt.*

*What would she do?*

*This was the person who worried about me every second of every day, mostly with good reason. Back when I had left for school camp for just a week, she slept in my room, kept my phone charged all the time, and nagged my sister with her constant, “What do you think she is doing now?”*

*I had always been her baby, happy to be spoiled. How could I leave?*

*I took in the slight numbness in her eyes, as she looked at me silently. God knows what she was thinking, for my own thoughts were a complete mess. I could’ve tried saying something deep or mature, but what difference would that make?*

*So I simply hugged her tightly saying, “I’ll just take you to P.G. with me.”*

# Caution! Mum Logic Ahead



Preksha Paul

Second Prize (11-17 yrs)

*Mothers play a key role in our lives. They often tell us tales of caution to warn us, believe in myths and legends unknowing of the science behind it. But my mother is quite different as you will read ahead. This is a story about my own quirky mother. Being a woman of science, my mum (as I call her) ,always has answers to all the questions I ask. “Mum who invented the fan ?”or “Why is the water blue in this bucket and pink in that one ?” are some examples of questions I would ask her, and each time she would have an answer. This piqued my interest in science too.*

*Now as I was saying, our mums tell us oral traditions . Some of the most common ones my mum tells me are “Don’t cut your nails and hair on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and on my birthday,” “Don’t pass scissors from hand to hand.” or “Don’t use the scissors in thin air .” to which I always ask why?*

*But no matter how many times she tells me to brush my hair , tells me these precautionary tales, or scolds me, I have always, and will always love her no matter what. Be it whatever, I love every side of my mum (even when she scolds me!)*

# Spelled With Mother's Love



Kaavya Chauhan  
Third Prize (11-17 yrs)

*"You'll get there, honey." whispered Aadya's mother reassuringly.*

*"But Mumma," Aadya sniffled, "how will I ever spell chrysanthemum?"*

*"Remember, I'm always here to help you." she remarked, wiping away her tears with her dupatta.*

*Aadya sat on the carpet, flashcards scattered around, as her mother brought letter tiles from a board game. Aadya was puzzled as she watched her use the tiles to spell the words. Gradually, Aadya felt more confident, knowing the words weren't enemies.*

*Aadya was nervous on the day of the competition. She looked for her mother in the crowd of parents, as she walked onto the stage. Her heart pounded, her hands trembled, and her throat tightened. Without her mother, chrysanthemum felt dreadful.*

*Overwhelmed, Aadya fled the stage. Her mother awaited her backstage in her floral kurta. She pulled Aadya into a warm embrace. "Dearest, don't be scared. With me and without me, chrysanthemum isn't a monster, just a flower waiting to bloom." Aadya felt her fear melt as she walked back. She gripped the microphone and confidently spelled all the words. The audience erupted in applause. Aadya hugged the one who believed in her, the one who turned chrysanthemum from a fear to a flower.*

# Maa

Yashi Sharma

First Prize (18 + yrs)



*“I think my mother knows when my voice falls hallow on brief calls, and I text her nothing between good morning and good night, that I have fallen into my numbness again. She used to think it was sensitivity, fickleness, a weakness that I needed to toughen out to take after her. I think she sees It is strange how often I sit in the corner of my bed back home, expressionless, as if in a delirium. I think she sees what a task it becomes to return to the blue walls she chose for us. The house itself stands as tall as it did at first, yet it seems to have shrunk in the many monsoons I left it out to dry. Whether the ceilings slipped their marks or the walls closed in, the hallways retain a sense of stifled spirit- as if all the things the house witnessed, it enclosed within itself invisibly, slowly filling the rooms with phantom memories.*

*The hallways breathed anew with anticipation of life. She wasn't even born yet, a mere specimen being brought to life. Her mother had also been a differing strain from the rest of the family-if family was ever the right word. In the pale hues of the washed-out crochet of the neighborhood, the mother-daughter stuck out like a deep, graying red.*

*The hostel laundry runs your clothes to rags-it snags the fabric, pumps it chock full of lint, discolors every brightness. I find the fabric of myself unraveling under the light of familiarity. How must I hide from you, Maa, the more iridescent parts of me? When I step into the threshold of our home, why must I leave myself behind? I am not prideful, but I do not fit into your society.*

# Maa

Yashi Sharma

First Prize (18 + yrs)



*You have raised an atheist. You have raised an unnatural, unfamiliar thing. You have raised a child that will not simply nod. I am numb. I shut down. When there is no escape, and saffron colors in the paths I'd rather save for rainbows, I toughen up.*

*She came back to a house missing shingles, and a soul. It was distant. She still failed to gauge the gaps. Decaying dynasties leave such flimsy hope for joy. When her mother was young, and so full of life, she did not know her. As she moved by the hallway, she saw for the last time the scribbles she made in the walls as a child, the tiles of the floor where she lay, motionless, as if in a delirium. They had all lived alone their whole lives. She couldn't live with the ghosts of the past if she wanted to continue the tradition.*

*The walls in the old home used to read "love is looking together in the same direction." I would sing it around, a light-footed youngling scurrying over verandahs too hot for me. Do we look in the same direction, Maa? You look at my downcast eyes and see my aversion to sleep. Do you see how you, your mother, and her mother before us, are all lined up in my image?*

*When I look in looking glasses, I search for reflections of you, so that I may hate my face less. You are beautiful. You have left me his nose. When rains would cool the verandahs, did I see my muddy footprints dance before you wiped them clean? Did they ever speak to you? I search for something in rain still. No one nags my muddied tracks now. Silence. Does the temperament of a social recluse come in hand with the shape of the nose?*

# Maa

Yashi Sharma

First Prize (18 + yrs)



*She used to say nothing good came of lizards. Her gaze upturned at the reclusive creatures shooing them away from the roses of the 'love is looking...' sign. She cut mangoes and gave her daughter the biggest share.*

*There are no lizards here, no one thinks of her when mangoes are mentioned. She bought the first book her daughter owned. The proper novel. George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*. The princess climbs high towers to find the specter of a motherly presence. You have raised me to be strong, to fear nothing, to expect nothing. The princess gazes at the specter's grey hair and calls it moonlight-woven. Your hair will soon be grey, Maa. Should I fetch the mehndi again, and hide the dusk? You have years enough to let the full moon come to pass.*

*I remember picking out pink carnations. Pink used to be your color. When did I ever steal away that glow, Maa? Was it me? Your eyes are downcast too. Do you also pretend to be who you are not? In the years you spent raising us, did you fill your life with so much of us, there was no room for you? I have very little memories of hugging you. Always something about sensibility. But you would wait outside of birthday parties after a full day's work, my school bag in hand, letting me live a little bit more. Why does my reading offend you so? You are proud. Does the enlargement of my world scare you? That someday, I might not text between good morning and good night?*

# Maa

Yashi Sharma

First Prize (18 + yrs)



*Old trees grow serpentine from their own weight, their barks crawling through the undergrowth, knots and twigs taking root in the ground, becoming mystical in their subservience. A few such trees loomed over a lake near the house. By some miracle, the family sets out together. I've always thought the water calls to me. Whether I'm knee deep in a pond with stones in my pockets or merely being nipped in the soles by meddlesome fish, I do not know. I remember Himachal. The giant lake somewhere. I threw the fish some unbaked dough and cried out "le, behen!" (take it, sister!) You laughed. I love that sound. It plays in my head when I think of home. I rarely ever think of home. I think I left the house to sing its own song of grief, I have been in solemn harmony too long.*

# Hope for Change

Smitha Raman

Arty Hearty Soulful Story



*“Ashray please don’t come in with dirty shoes. Take them off outside, dust them and carry them into the shoe rack.”*

*“Mom, I know it. I have been doing it for years.”*

*Ashray a class 3 child returns home from school or play each day to this instruction by his mother and responds in the same way!!*

*“Did you finish your food today, or land up wasting it again, Ashray?”*

*(There was silence!)*

*A very smart, clever and energetic child that Ashray is, his parents have to keep an extra vigil on him at all times.*

*He is good with his school studies, copes very well with his academics and extracurricular activities. He is a very talented child too. A child that every parent would be blessed to have!*

*Due to this hyperactive persona of Ashray, he usually gives little or no importance to his eating habits. Which is the reason why, he invariably comes back home with half eaten food and tends to throw the remaining in the trash. Parents often receive complains from his class teacher too, regarding this unwelcome food habit of his. His class teacher tried innumerable ways to get him to finish his lunch, sometimes by taking him into confidence, sometimes by comparing him to his friends, sometimes by getting him to sit with his peers who finish their food & sometimes of course by strict disciplining action.*

# Hope for Change

Smitha Raman

Arty Hearty Soulful Story



*But unfortunately, it seemed to work for a day or two and then he is back to this usual behavior. Ashray's parents have turned all the creative tables around by telling him stories about how he should not waste food as it is a way of insulting God, how difficult it is for the farmer to grow food and that he was wasting it and much more.*

*His father also explained the long and patient process that his Maa took, to carefully curate nutritious food for him each and every day. Hoping that this emotional blackmail would work! They even bought him a new and interesting thermos lunch box so his food could stay fresh and warm, which might inspire him to finish his food!*

*Nothing really seemed to work. It brought the parents to their wits end! They were perennially disturbed with this habit of Ashray. Every day the same story continued. For fear of being scolded by his parents, he started throwing the leftover food in the school trash can or in the dustbin on his way back home. Which obviously led him to start lying.*

*This being the situation, which seem to have no results, the parents were both very troubled and decided to take him to the family doctor to get his health check-up done so as to rule out any worms in his stomach or any other digestion or health issues, which may be his reason for reluctance to relish and complete his food. To their fortune, the doctor ruled out any health issues too!*

# Hope for Change

Smitha Raman

Arty Hearty Soulful Story (18+ yrs)



*Now this pushed them to a more challenging situation but as parents are, they would surely not give up on their child and were always on the lookout for creative and inspiring ways to help solve this problem. Which could probably lead to a serious irreversible habit in future if it is not corrected.*

*As this went on for a long time without much positive results, it so happened that one beautiful Sunday morning Ashray and his mother were taking an early morning walk on the sea shore enjoying the bright orange sky due to the sunrise and the sound of the exciting waves lashing on the sea shore! They were watching the seagulls fly around in the fresh morning blue sky and hearing their loud calls echoing on the waves.*

*When suddenly, Ashray spotted a young boy, probably about his age, a 9 year old, at some distance, throwing something back tirelessly into the sea literally oblivious about what is going on around him or who is around him.*

*On moving closer to the boy, Ashray noticed that there were innumerable crabs that were being washed onto the shore every time a sea wave hit. This little boy would religiously pick up one crab at a time and throw it back sincerely into the sea. Again with the next wave uncountable crabs would be thrown onto the shore. This phenomenon kept continuing and the little boy who was undeterred by those innumerable crabs being thrown back onto the sea shore, continued to pick up one crab at a time and kept throwing it back into the sea.*

*This was an ongoing scene.*

# Hope for Change

Smitha Raman

Arty Hearty Soulful Story (18 + yrs)



*A very curious and inquisitive boy that Ashray is, and after standing silently at a safe distance watching this scene for a while, he asks his mother, “What difference does it make mother? Even after he throws one crab back, a large number of them are back again on the shore with the next wave.”*

*(Mother seemed to sense that her inquisitive son would surely ask her something as she observed him curiously watching the entire scene.)*

*To which the mother replies, “ My dear, It makes a difference to that one crab! It can be saved from becoming a meal for the predators that are continuously flying in the sky to quickly stoop down and grab one.” “It can survive.”*

*Mother continues by saying, “One small act of this young boy, could be a life saver to that one crab. So why not?”*

*(This kept Ashray thinking!)*

*After a few moments he quickly asked, “Is that what you meant Maa, when you once told me that every morsel I stop wasting can make a difference in the life of someone needy, by giving them respite from hunger!”*

*She thought to herself, One never knows from which direction solutions would emerge.*

*She saw HOPE !*

*The joy that was visible on the mother’s face was inexplicable!*

# The Day I Lost My Mother

Arnav Nagpal

Arty Hearty Soulful Story



*It was a chilly, pleasant morning. Mom woke me up frantically. While I brushed my teeth, she kissed me goodbye and left for work. I didn't know that would be the last time I saw her.*

*I went about my usual day. Around four, a friend called to hang out. Just as I was leaving, I got a mysterious call. Tempted, yet terrified, I picked it up, trembling. A low, familiar voice whispered, "Someone's after me... Please, help." It sounded eerily close to mom's, but that made no sense. Before I could answer, the line went dead. Shaken, I shrugged it off and left.*

*I returned a few hours later. A scream pierced the air, coming from my house. My heart skipped a beat. I dashed in. The door lock was broken. I crept to my room. My eyes widened. Everything went silent. I heard a ringing voice in my ears. It was as if someone had stabbed me in the heart. Except, it wasn't me. It was my mother.*

*I felt my world crumbling. I tried CPR, but in vain. Tears streamed down my cheeks. "Be strong," I told myself. As I dialed the cops, a noise echoed downstairs. I saw a gun on the floor and a woman slipping into the next room. It must've dropped from her pocket.*

*The sirens wailed faintly in the distance. I picked up the gun. I knew what had to be done.*

# The Empty Chair

Esha Singh

Arty Hearty Soulful Story



*Every evening at six, the chair rocked by itself.*

*It was old—wood worn smooth by years of lullabies, spilled milk, and stories whispered into dreams. Everyone in the village said it was haunted. But Tara knew better.*

*It was Maa's chair.*

*She used to sit there, humming as the rice boiled and the sky turned saffron. After the fever took her, the chair stayed... like a breath held too long. On Tara's twelfth birthday, she made kheer by herself. She burnt it a little. Then she placed a bowl on the floor beside the chair.*

*"I didn't forget the cardamom," she said.*

*The chair didn't reply. But the wind slowed, and somewhere, a koel sang out of season.*

*That night, Tara dreamed of warm arms and laughter that smelled like jasmine. She woke up to find the bowl empty.*

*No dog. No cat. Just the chair, still rocking.*

# The Empty Chair

Esha Singh

Arty Hearty Soulful Story



*Years later, Tara would become a chef in another country, another world. But every dish she made had a pinch of memory—of a mother who never really left.*

*Because love, the real kind, doesn't vanish.*

*It just... learns to sit quietly.*

**AND ROCK.**

# The Aroma of Cardamom

Shubh Gautam

Arty Hearty Soulful Story



*The aroma of cardamom and anxiety hung thick in the air. Ma's fingers, gnarled like ancient olive trees, kneaded the dough with the same rhythm that had soothed my nightmares as a child. Outside, the marketplace buzzed, a cacophony she shut out with a silent grace only mothers possessed.*

*This year, the drought had been cruel. The wheat crop withered, mirroring the worry lines etched deeper on her face. Her hands, calloused from toil, held the promise of roti, a promise she intended to keep even if it meant rationing her own share.*

*Today was my 12th birthday. I watched her, mesmerized. The simple act of making bread, imbued with her unwavering love. She caught my eye, a fleeting smile gracing her lips. "Happy birthday, beta," she whispered, her voice raspy with exhaustion.*

*The first roti, warm and soft, was offered to me. It tasted not only of wheat, but of sacrifice, resilience, and a love so profound it transcended hunger. In that single bite, I understood. A mother's love is the most enduring harvest, a sustenance that nourishes the soul long after the fields lie barren.*

*Mother's love is everything you want in your life... They are great...*

# A Second Chance

Navya Singh

Arty Hearty Soulful Story



*I'm Ria, a 10th-grader living with my parents and siblings. My father's often away for work, and my mother serves in the police force, working long hours from 8:00 AM to 11:00 PM. I've felt conflicted about her job, resenting her absence and the responsibilities I've had to shoulder. I've taken care of my siblings and managed schoolwork alone, feeling like I was on my own.*

*But everything changed when my mother was injured on duty, hit on the head and fell into a coma. Seeing her vulnerable, I realized how much I took her strength for granted. I thought about the harsh words and ignored Mother's Days. I prayed fervently for her recovery, wanting to make amends and celebrate Mother's Day with her.*

*Miraculously, she woke up the next day, back to her usual self. Overwhelmed with emotion, I thanked God and apologized to my mother. I promised to appreciate her more, grateful for her sacrifices. This experience taught me the importance of forgiveness and gratitude, and I'm committed to cherishing our relationship.*

# Maa

A collection of Short Stories on Maa



Back Cover Design by Vedika Keswani  
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Winner of Eso He Boiskah Art Competition by  
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