

What
would
Life
be
Like
without
fear?

Srisrividhiya won the second prize for the essay in the Royal Commonwealth Essay Competition in the year 1997. There were more than 4500 entries from 887 schools across the commonwealth.

Feedback from the examiners

"K.Srisrividhiya Kalyanasundaram's entry on the topic, "What would life be like without fear", was warmly appreciated by the examiners in Class A. They commented that this was an extraordinary essay which answered the question at its deepest spiritual level. The technical brilliance and handling of colour demonstrated by the illustrations was most impressive. In the words of one examiner, "they were an absolute joy in the way they complemented the text in conveying a sense of life's fears moving towards the 'unlimited freedom' of fearlessness". This examiner, like others in the Class, was "enormously moved" by how Srisrividhiya expressed her insights."

Dr. Charles Kemp, Chief Examiner
Royal Commonwealth Society Essay Competition

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Illustrations
based on
the character "Anna"
in
"Mr God , This is Anna"
~ A true life story written by fynn.

"The air is
 for swimming,
 not for flying.
 We must imitate
 the dolphin and
 not the eagle" He
 sprang into the air
 as he spoke, then a
 smoothly curved
 fin emerged along his
 spinal column

Extract from Isaac Asimov's "Winds of Change"

Inspired from a page in the Doon School magazine, 1995



The Skies were there , but they knew me not. The
earth I was standing upon didn't know who I was.

A Stranger To Myself

I stood There absolutely alone, petrified. The skies were there, but They knew me not. The earth I was standing upon didn't know who I was. The trees, plants, mom, dad, friends : for everyone I existed -
as a name ; a relationship. But they knew not who I was.

Nobody knew the real me. They were satisfied with seeing what they thought I was. I stood out there,
 'Solitary'

I shivered at The whole idea. I wasn't a daughter, a sister, a friend, a student. I was 'ME' with no identity. I was afraid to know that I had to take up my own path. I had to look into a dark room and make my own Light.



Now I saw myself shrinking, terror in my eyes,
fear dancing over me.

I ran from there knowing not what I was running from and where to.

I wished somebody would ask me what I was afraid of. But, I knew it wouldn't help.

They would all stand there smiling and say "You're safe my child ; nothing to be afraid of"

I have been afraid

- afraid of having an accident
- afraid of groping in the dark
- afraid of falling in love
- afraid of an eclipse
- afraid of death
- afraid of every possible feeling ; experience.

Yet, I wasn't even aware that I was afraid. It had become a part of myself.

Now I saw myself shrinking, terror in my eyes, fear dancing over me.

It was a shock! Never had I imagined I could be frightened. Yet, all the time been afraid of getting frightened.

Today I wanted to see the dark corners inside me, unknown and unsought. The twinkling stars inside my head to which I was as yet an alien.



Step out of your definitions!

The Defensive Limits.

Oh Youth ! Looking at these things around
Why do so many questions arrest you ?

Amidst this that you call reality
Why do you wish to know -
whether these trees are taller than those ?

Alas Oh Youth ! You don't see the moment
You see only a moment like the one that passed.

Will you not see the tree
Oh Young man ! and look at the tree

Do not see the barks, that are rough like the rocks
But see the banks.

You fail to see Yourself , Young man !
for you see a brother ; a father ; a son .

But you don't see the real you .

Look at Yourself
And

STEP OUT OF THESE DEFINITIONS .



The ageless years.

It had been easy all along to tell myself that I am caring, loving, moody, tough.... I had just lived upto a definition of myself; never tried to go beyond.

'NO MORE DEFINITIONS OF MYSELF' I yelled.

Unveiling the gray mist.

What am I afraid of ?

I had to climb each step of my own life to answer this question.

I looked at myself. I was three years old, with wonder in my eyes. Everything was new: the stars, the sky, the flowers, school. But I just accepted them. Anything I couldn't understand I was afraid. The first time I saw a picture on the television, I was frightened, then it was curiosity and finally I accepted it.

I went up the ladder. Seven years now, crying; "Papa, that seven headed dragon won't take me from you. will it?"

fear in a nutshell.



losing something I loved ; wanted ;
Something that wasn't a part of me.

Now I was eleven and there were queries: "Mama ; But why should They fight ?" and there were tears. "Mama ! can't we have a world without wars ? Why aren't we allowed to live our own lives ? I am afraid Ma, I don't want to die so soon"

At present I am Sixteen - The Youth, aspiring , enjoying ,

As I watched a movie , so totally absorbed ; lost, I suddenly felt afraid.

I was afraid of losing myself in my surroundings

So that was what I have been afraid of all along -

losing something I loved ; wanted ;
Something that wasn't a part of me.

I wallowed for a while in my discovery. I said to myself -

So fear peeps its head when we lose ourselves.

In The dark , we are afraid of losing the power to see . On the roads , afraid of losing our physical being . In life , we are afraid of losing ourselves in death.



Are you still afraid That aerodynamics limits your
freedom to fly?

The subtler realms

"According to the law of Aerodynamics, the bumble bee cannot fly. I guess nobody bothered to tell the bee."

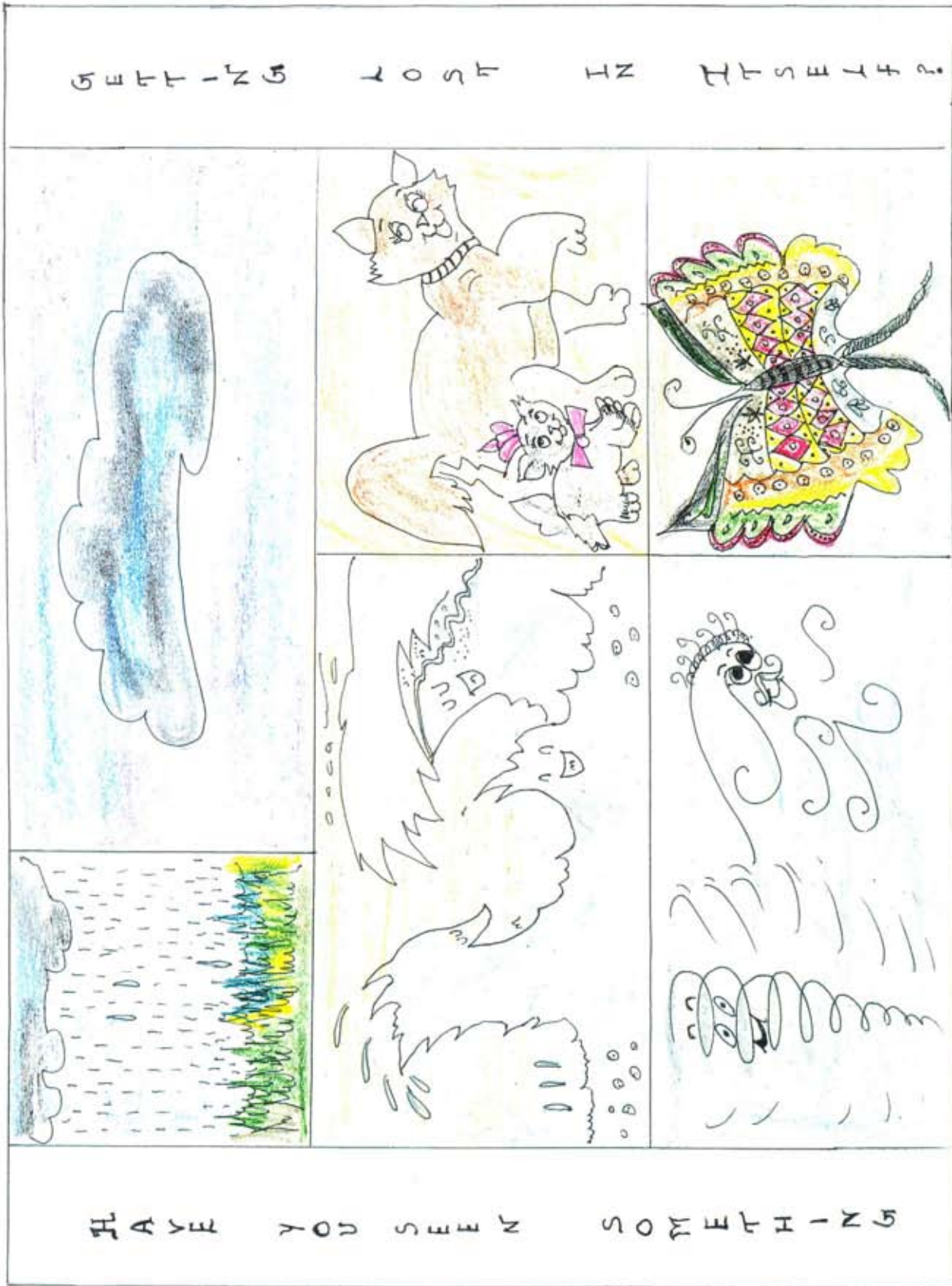
Imagine you are the bumble bee. Had you thought that aerodynamics would stop you from flying, wouldn't you have been afraid of losing your flight. perhaps you would never have flown!

But why fear - Just why ??

Is it because we limit ourselves. Is it because we do not see that we have the maximum potential within us. Are we not AWARE?

Have we ever seen a little wave afraid of losing itself in the water. No - for it knows that it is the mighty ocean.

Have we ever seen a soft breeze afraid of losing itself in the storm. No - for it knows that it is the raging storm.



The subtler realms.

Have we ever seen a cloud getting lost in the skies ? ; a raindrop losing itself in the earth ? ; a relationship getting lost in love? .

— They are AWARE of what They are.

Just imagine a butterfly being afraid of the wind , not aware that it is the wind that carries it . We would have never seen those beautiful patterns on its back.

So the problem is within you and me, we who do not know what we are and live in an illusory circle of time.

Flight Without Wings.

There have been a thousand fears , a thousand phobias above me , below me , beside me , behind me . I have been caught in their swirl. This is the time to break out. The storm is engulfing me. Yet , I knew I was breaking out of the swirl each moment.

I was aware of every emotion inside me . I was a spectator watching myself.



flight without wings.

'No time for fear' I cried out. My self had given me its hand to hold on. The storm was raging over me. The speed was terminal. There were obstacles in every step.

I and my self were together and we were out. The swirl went on with its work trying to devour every susceptible person.

I looked at it and wondered how I could have lost myself there.

Beyond Horizons.

My Self was there, ready for a talk.
'It is time to be aware' it said, 'you who seek life without fear'

Do you hear that music, oh ! seeker
Do you hear the tinkle of the flowers amidst
the leaves.

Be sharp, for among the creepers
There is a leaf singing.

Oh Youth ! Do you hear the tunes of the sand as
you walk.
The little cloud's laugh in that, rejoicing sky.



Do you ever hear at night
The silent beats engulfing the universe.

You ! who seeks the infinite !
Do you hear the wind lift the withered petals?

Do you, among the storms
hear the assured voice of the roots ?

Do you in the burning fires
hear the softness of the flames ?

Do you hear in the midst of your anger
Love flowing unasked ?

Do you ever hear at night
The silent beats engulfing the universe.

Do you, amidst the turmoils that roll above
your head
hear the music of your breath.

Oh Youth ! Seeking life without fear
Watch Yourself , Be Aware .

And feel life singing inside you !



"I am going on a beautiful journey.
Don't you shed tears for me" said the dying rose.

There was no fear; there was Awareness.
and as I lived in each moment I was free
It was freedom; unlimited.

There was inexpressible joy and love
flowed unconsciously.

I stood There watching myself, living so
effortlessly.

Naturally I was no more afraid of
DEATH.

- I was aware of a dying rose.

I watched a rose die
wilt, wither and be blown away by the wind
I saw it being pricked by its own thorns.
and yet smile as it passed away.

'aye!' I heard it address
'aye! My young little buds
I am going on a beautiful journey
Don't you shed tears for me.

I shall not see you bloom
I shall no more hear you laugh
I cannot tell you when the wind comes
But don't you fear the world.

Where the mind is without fear!



Unveiling the gray mist

See This sweet smile on my face
 And remember to have one like that always
 When the day comes for you to go
 To the newcomers, see that, your smile you show.

aye! my merry little youth!
 You look lovely in your colours.
 Don't you listen to what men talk of death.
 and don't you fear it too.'

I turned around the corner
There was the youth bewildered and afraid
 There was an oldman on his deathbed
 talking of a thousand unfulfilled wishes with
 fear in his eyes.

Where the mind is without fear.

So finally I knew what I was
 running from and where to.

I just wasn't running at all. I was
 now looking at things I had never tried to see.

By the way, did you know.

'The only thing that ever sat its way
 to success is a hen.'



Where does this path go?

I wasn't afraid and it felt wonderful. Time worked with me. Every job I had to do, I did without feeling the least tired.

The job is already done, I thought each time. Someone asked,

'Sir where does this path go?' The answer was profound. 'I have been seeing it for the past Twenty years and it hasn't moved an inch.'

The mystifying patterns of my life were now a painter's masterpiece, and I stood there admiring my own completed work.

I saw that no one had bound me. I was liberated ; free. I guessed that we choose every tiny moment in our life and make it as we choose it to be.

I had built foundations for my dream castles.

I didn't fear God. I wasn't praying to him anymore. I was conversing with him and we felt a lot more close to each other.



The people still went on as a flock. But I was
apart 'unique'.

There was a change in me. There are two ways in which people can be winners.

- i) When they win ; struggle, do their part and win
- ii) When somebody else loses.

I was now the leader of The first group.

I was no more a follower. I was the leader of my own self. I and my self were friends and we knew each other.

I saw The individuality in each person. The people still went on as a flock. But I was apart 'unique'.

I watched myself in love with everything. Love that encompassed The whole universe. The feeling was so simple , so great. It was beautiful to watch me love myself, without ego , possessiveness , pride or satisfaction.

I had no doubt , no hatred , no anger, no terror , no questions.

Unlimited freedom.

I was The infinite and I saw this in every particle in the universe.

It was so beautiful. Love was so spontaneous and life so easy ; so special.

I looked out with wonder. I wasn't lonely anymore.

I smiled and gave a little clap.
'Wow!' I told myself. 'You did it'.

My self was out there with its ever graving grin.

"So kid you have made your conclusions"
it smiled at me.

I laughed.

"What about asking the sky to fall on you ; the clouds to swallow you up"

The Twinkle in its eye was too obvious.

"Hey come on , You needn't pull my leg. As if these wonderful skies would frighten me idiot "
I said lovingly.

"Leave Me With The Skies "



'Leave me with The Skies'

✓

ENTRY DETAILS
(to be filled out in Block Capitals)

- 1 COUNTRY.....INDIA.....
- 2 SURNAME/FAMILY NAME.....
.....KALYANA SUNDARAM.....
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.....K. K. Nagar
.....MADRAS 78.....
- 7 ESSAY CLASS (A, B, C, D).....A.....
- 8 TOPIC NUMBER (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).....4.....
- 9 EXACT NUMBER OF WORDS USED.....1960 words.....

I certify, as a member of staff of the school/college/organisation that:

- (a) the entry details 1-9 are correct.
(b) the student composed and hand-wrote or word-processed this essay.

NAME (in capitals).....MRS. HAMSA RAMDAS.....

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Any special considerations to be taken into account

(e.g. that English is the student's second/third language or that he/she suffers from some relevant disability)

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