

NEXT GEN WRITERS

INDIA



THE LETTERS ISSUE · NO. 2 · September 2026



OUR SECOND COMPETITION

Letters that Matter

*Winning letters from young writers, ages 8–17, gathered
from every corner of India.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY YASH BALANI

From the Founder

What a month this has been.

We held our very first online workshop, and I could not have asked for a better person to open that door for us. Bijoyeti Ghosh gave our children her time, her warmth and her craft in “The Art of Storytelling: Turning Ideas into Stories”, and the difference it made was visible almost immediately. Children who had been unsure of how to begin a story walked away with ideas they were eager to write down. Thank you, Bijoyeti, for saying yes to us so early in our journey.

We also had the joy of hosting filmmaker Ida Ali for a live Q&A. Her pointers for young writers are coming your way in our next edition!

Then there are the entries for Letters That Matter. They have arrived from every corner of India this time, and reading them has been the most heartening part of my month. Different cities, different schools, different lives, all sitting down to write a letter that says something true. That is exactly why this platform exists, and seeing children find their way to it from so far and wide tells me we are doing something right.

To every child who wrote, and every parent and teacher who encouraged them: thank you.

Keep writing.

Seema Parwani

Founder, Next Gen Writers India

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ART & ILLUSTRATION Yash Balani

The Art of Storytelling

Turning Ideas into Stories — with Bijoyeti Ghosh, Author & Storyteller

This month marked a first for Next Gen Writers India: our very first online workshop. Author and storyteller Bijoyeti Ghosh joined us to take our young writers through the journey every story makes, from a loose idea in the head to words settled on a page.

“Keep reading. Keep noticing. Keep writing.”

— Bijoyeti Ghosh, closing the session

That line is the one our children carried home, and it is advice worth keeping close at any age. Noticing is the part young writers often skip, and it is where the best stories begin.

ABOUT BIJOYETI GHOSH

Bijoyeti Ghosh is the author of *Bougainvillea* and *When the Clouds Come Down: Stories of Rain, Memories and Still Places*. Follow her on Instagram: [@itsbijoyeti](https://www.instagram.com/itsbijoyeti)



Bijoyeti Ghosh — author, storyteller, and our first workshop guest.

Thank you, Bijoyeti, for giving our children your time, your warmth and your craft.

There Is a Door in Your House That Was Not There Yesterday

by Mishita Motwaney, 13

I stood there looking at the open door with flickering lights, wondering if I should enter inside or exit from there. Last night, I woke up to use the washroom. I even saw the door and heard some sounds, but I believed that I must be sleepy and hearing things.

The realisation hits me when my shaky hands try to open that door. I stood still for at least 10 minutes trying to decide if I should run from there or enter and face the thing inside that very room.

I entered the door with small, steady steps. I had an intuition the very second I entered that I was facing some truth or fact that was not revealed to the world yet, but was kept hidden inside of me. I met my best version, and I feared that my family and friends might like this version of me more than my original version. My best version understood that, explained to me that she would not do such a thing, and had come to explain things to me and give me tips that could help me become better than my original version in the present.

I heard those amazing tips and remembered that I had to leave for school. Mom shouting at me to put my tiffin in the school bag. The school bus had arrived and was almost about to leave without me. I quickly rushed into the bus with my school bag's one strap on my shoulder and one hanging.



OUR SECOND COMPETITION

Letters that Matter

“Write to someone, or something, that matters to you.”

For our second competition, we turned to one of the oldest and most personal forms of writing there is: the letter. We invited young writers across India, and Indian writers living abroad, to write to someone, or something, that matters to them.

Some chose a person, a grandmother they never got to know, a younger self, a stranger they may never meet. Others wrote to an idea or a cause, addressing the world's leaders, or art itself, or the planet we all share. Every entry was an original letter written in the child's own voice, salutation and sign-off and all.

The letters arrived from three age groups, free to enter and open to every young writer who wanted to be heard. What follows are the winning letters and runners-up chosen in each category. Every entry we received will be published in this eMag.

THE CATEGORIES

Ages 8–12

Ages 13–15

Ages 16–17

To the Aliens

by Tarini Mishra · Mumbai

Hello there! From Earth, do you know us too?
Do you feel the same things?
Same issues or plights?
Do you guys have night and day?
Do you have poverty? Or death? Or hate?
Do you have sadness? Or grief? Or pain?
Do you have an enemy? Someone you despise. Do you have
discrimination?
Do you have love? Or joy? Or hope?
Do you have families? Or emotion at all?
Do you miss people? Or cry, or even scream?
Do you have culture? Or unity? Or dreams?
Do you aspire to something, no matter how far away it seems?
Do you have movies? And stories, and food!
Do you have jobs? Something to do?
TV? Mirrors? Books? Pets?
Is there someone on the planet who isn't like you?
Is there something you want to change?
I know I do.
But you know what?
We stay here, because maybe one day we can fix it.

With hope,

Farewell

To the Selectors

by Parth Kabra · Mumbai

Respected Sir, Madam,

My name is Parth Kabra, I am 10 years old and live in Mumbai. As a passionate follower of India cricket, I have made a 16 man squad with a mix of experienced and young players who I am sure will perform well to make our country proud.

Here is the sixteen man squad who I think deserve a spot in the ICC CWC 2027. (This is not the best 11)

Top order batters — Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Rohit Sharma, Devdutt Paddikal

Middle order anchors — Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, Rajat Patidar

Wicket keeper batsman — KL Rahul, Ishan Kishan

All rounders — Krunal Pandya, Axar Patel, Hardik Pandya

Bowlers — Jaspreet Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Prince Yadav and Kuldeep Yadav

Captain — Rajat Patidar | Vice Captain — Shubman Gill

I have chosen Rajat Patidar over Shubman Gill as the captain as Shubman Gill's form is not the best as captain of India while Patidar has lead Royal Challenger's Bangalore (RCB) to successive Indian Premier League's (IPL) and stays calm when under pressure.

Here is the best 11:

In at 1 — Rohit Sharma, experienced and explosive opener

In at 2 — Vaibhav Suryavanshi, fearless left handed opener to disrupt bowling lines. I think this opening pair suits the India team as it is a left hand/right hand opening pair which can disrupt the bowler's line.

In at 3 — Virat Kohli, the anchor at number 3 to control the innings

In at 4 — Shubman Gill (VC), shifted to number 4 to dominate spinners and be the Gautam Gambhir role of the India team

In at 5 — Rajat Patidar (C), the tactical backbone of the India team

In at 6 — KL Rahul (WK), the ultimate finisher for the India team

In at 7 — Krunal Pandya, a finisher and a world class spinner for the death overs

In at 8 — Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the opening bowler, puts pressure on the openers

In at 9 — Mohammad Shami, a seam specialist with a lot of ODI experience

In at 10 — Kuldeep Yadav, frontline wrist spinner to dominate the middle overs

In at 11 — Jasprit Bumrah, the anchor of India's bowling

I hope this is helpful to the Senior Selectors as we have not won the tournament in 16 long years. Hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards,

Parth Kabra

1ST PLACE

Dear Younger Me

by Guhana P · Chennai

Leprechaun Avenue,

Somewhere Over The Rainbow.

20th August 2026

There was a time that I believed that people stayed the same. A time when I thought friendships lasted forever and that nothing would ever change. I never imagined that one day the people I knew would become strangers. I believed that we would change together and stick together always but things started to change in me and around me too. My friends changed. They made new friends, found new interests and became a different person all together. At first, everything felt out of place but I soon realised that I was changing too. Everything changed. From my values, to my interests and even my friends. Things that mattered to me once did not matter as much anymore. I understood that change was inevitable and was not something to be afraid of. It was something to embrace and accept. It enables us to discover new things about ourselves and to grow into the person that we are meant to be.

Friendships are important, that should be something that enriches you and not something that pulls you down. We should not let go of ourselves in the process. Sometimes, people grow apart and it is completely normal. Not every friendship lasts forever but it will stay with you forever. Those are the memories that you should treasure not just the ups but the downs too because the downs would have left a lasting change in you.

Remember, never fear change and never lose yourself just to keep a friend.

Yours Truly,

Your Older Self.

Dear Old Friend

by Sanna Karachiwala · Mumbai

I know you're not real. I know your existence depends upon my imagination. I know I have stopped thinking about you. You were my first friend. I used to talk to you all day. We used to draw together, eat together and even go to school together. My parents were worried, they thought I wasn't normal. But I enjoyed being with you. Some made fun of me because of you. Others feared me also because of you. Nevertheless, I continued talking to you.

Until one fine day, I stopped. You can call it maturity, puberty or reality. My imaginary friend was left in the past. I dreamt of you yesterday after 10 whole years. You looked exactly like how I drew you when I was 5. You were invisible to others, but the only friend I had at the time.

I still see your face when I look through the dark sky at night. You are dead, removed from the imaginary world. You are now a star in the sky who looks at me and smiles. "My little friend has grown so much." I hear your whisper. To me you were peace and simplicity, now replaced by my deep, mature thoughts. You are the symbol of dead innocence I can never experience again. Thank you for being a major part of my life. Mad though it seems, I miss you.

Yours lovingly,

Your long lost friend,

Sanna Karachiwala

Dear Stranger

by Anshita Bhardwaj · Ghaziabad

The beginning and the end of our story are the same: we will never meet. But still, I have something to tell you.

You are my great-grandmother. The day I was born, you might have been very happy. But just seven days later, you were gone forever.

In reality, I don't remember a single feature of your face. Not even one. But people around me tell me that you loved getting ready, eating candies, and trying new things every day. And that's something I really love about you. I even saw you in a family photo. Your smile was the widest of all. She had a green and white saree, out of which my grandmother made me a frock.

It feels really weird. I was alive when you were, but I don't remember a thing about you. Sometimes, I even feel like I was somehow the reason you left, though I know that isn't true. Mama and Papa say I have many habits like you. I love getting ready, eating candies, and many of your favourites are my favourites too. Sometimes, deep down, I feel like maybe I am version 2.0 of you.

If I could spend just one ordinary day with you, I would ask you a few things. Things I wish I could inherit from you, even though I don't know if I already have. I would talk to you, braid your hair, and help you tie your saree in a different way.

The life I know you had, from what others tell me, was very simple. You were ill quite often, but I don't believe that you, the most cheerful person of our family, could be ill. Even in the last few days of your life, when you became very ill, you still enjoyed your life. I think that was your strength.

But I want to ask you something. How did you feel when you saw your grandchildren? How did you feel when you saw me? Did you play with me? Did you ever hold me in your warm hands? Did you bless me? I have so many questions for you.

And in the end, I just want to tell you that maybe, as people around me say, I am version 2.0 of you. I will try to be like you — to enjoy my life even in hard times. Because now I know that this can be a strength, just like it was for you.

Maybe we never met, Grandma. But maybe, in some little ways, I still carry you with me.

With Love,

Your Version 2.0, Anshita

1ST PLACE

Dear Art

by Saanvi Jaiswal · Bhopal

I can't explain in words what you mean to me,
that feeling of being close with you, gives my
heart a reason to beat. I have been left out
everywhere but you created a space for me
where i feel welcomed and accepted as i am
this is my only safe place!

you matter to me more then anything in this
world because you are the only thing that i have
and the only thing that made me realize what
"love" is. Love is you. Love is what you give me.
Love is what i experience. Love is what we
experience together.

I'm forever grateful to you for giving me a
reason to live and to keep going.

Nothing really matters to me but oh that feeling
when im creating something, it makes me bleed
and heals me at the same time. I hope to feel this
in every universe and every life time.

yours truly,

Sanvi

Dear World Leaders

by Siddhangana Tiwari · Bhopal

Dear, all world leaders of today and tomorrow,

I hope you are good, surely you will be and really you should be! Lately I had questions for you on my mind that I wanted you to answer. If you had to choose between humanity and resources for development of yourself or fulfilling your desires, what would you choose? Currently most answer with humanity but their actions reflect the second option. I want to ask you: what do you want the upcoming generations to inherit from us, the pain and despair or a beautiful world?

Today nationalism is often confused with having enmity towards other nations, but is that the real essence of nationalism? The polluted air does not know boundaries of nations; the dirty water, empty resources, and degrading environment do not differ in countries. We must remember that the world and its resources are not a gift from God but a borrowing from upcoming generations.

Today countries fight wars for resources in the name of nation, but is nationalism destruction of humanity? No, and it's important to learn this distinction. We should share a feeling of brotherhood and fraternity globally. I'm not telling everyone to become allies with every nation tonight, but to understand that there is something more important than one's greed, and that is humanity.

Yes, today it may seem impossible to you all, but when you clear the fog of hatred there would be love all around for every human. Because across boundaries divided by religion and caste, we are all humans and that's what is important.

Let us make a small promise, leaders: we will try to leave this earth more beautiful than we found it, not more destroyed with blood, pollution and degradation, and we can't do that by nuclear bombs and weapons.

We have to understand that our one small effort may prevent a mother's tear whose son died in war, a sister's tear whose brother died due to a nuclear attack, and a father's tear whose daughter was murdered in riots.

So I hope, dear future leaders of today and tomorrow, you will understand, and not only understand but take action, so that you truly become an unforgettable leader.

Yours truly,

Siddhangana Tiwari

The Judges



Ms. Petunia Kingsley *Hong Kong*

English Language Educator · Executive Committee Member, EMPOWER – The Amber Foundation

JUDGED AGES 13-15 & 16-17

An English Language educator with wide experience across the secondary and tertiary sectors, Petunia designs classrooms that encourage students to question, imagine, and reach beyond the expected. She believes education should open doors, not close them.



Nidhi Shah *Mumbai*

Educator & Reading Mentor

JUDGED AGES 8-12

Nidhi is an educator and literature enthusiast with over eight years in IB education and Trinity College London certification. She runs novel-study book clubs, writing workshops, and speech and drama sessions, helping young writers find their voice.

THE PRIZES

Winners	₹1,000 cash, a ₹1,000 Crossword voucher, and a certificate — in each age category.
Runners-up	A ₹500 Crossword voucher and a certificate — in each age category.
Every writer	A digital certificate, and their letter published in this eMag.

PRESENTED BY TopHire · connecting India's top tech talent with leading companies

BOOK VOUCHERS BY Crossword

ALSO THIS MONTH

In Conversation with Ida Ali



Filmmaker Ida Ali, our live Q&A guest.

We were thrilled to host filmmaker Ida Ali for a live Q&A with our young writers! Ida made her debut short film, *Lift*, at just 16. Since then she has studied film direction at Chapman University's Dodge College, written and directed several shorts, and written *Uljhe Hue* for Amazon MiniTV. She is now working on her first feature film with Matchbox Films.

Our writers came with brilliant questions about storytelling, screenwriting, and turning ideas into films. Look out for the next edition of the NextGen Writers Magazine, where we'll share the best tips and takeaways from Ida's session.

UNTIL NEXT TIME

Thank you for reading this edition of the NextGen Writers Magazine! Every story, poem, and question our young writers share reminds us why this platform exists. Keep writing, keep imagining, and keep sending us your words.

We can't wait to read them.

With love,

Seema Parwani

Founder, Next Gen Writers India