Prompt- Discuss an accomplishment, event or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

Trrriiinnnnnggg!! My phone squealed by my study table, I glanced at the clock- 3:15…

Hmm, that’s weird. I don’t usually get calls around the afternoon on Saturdays.

And just like that, I shut my book to come back from the mind of Clarissa Dalloway, to my own.

“Heeeyyyyyy, man, can you please meet me right now? It’s really urgent.” It was Manav, he sounded a kid hopped on sugar ( much like him, hopped on sugar),nothing out of the ordinary.

I made way to our usual meeting spot, mentally restructuring my day’s time-table, October boards were crawling near. But I had to go…not only because I knew he hasn’t been doing well for the past couple of days but also because, and I am not really proud of this, he had a couple of brochures of colleges I wished to apply to. I really needed them too. So, with a mixed bag of emotions and motives, I headed out to meet him…

I reached the side of the road we had, after what seemed like infinitive calls, decided upon as he was growing impatient of waiting at his place. I see him. He walks towards me and hands me the brochures. And as I am leafing through them…Bam! I turn to see his patented bag and headphones on the ground. I cautiously spot his crocs, my eyes are still at ground level. I slowly follow the outline of him to reach his face, his eyes. He was crying…But it didn’t stop there, he stomped around, trying to wreck things, his own things, ignoring me and my “calm down” ’s. I was scared out of my mind. No, not of him, I knew him- the last thing on his mind would be to hurt anyone. This wasn’t a wrath, this was… an outcry. No, I was worried for him. We stood right next to the road. One thought, that’s all it would’ve took… A single thought. He calmed down eventually…crawled up into a ball. “ I don’t want this! I don’t want to f-feel this!” he kept silently muttering through the sobs.

As a psychology student, I had heard, read and studied many cases like this, bipolar depression, anxiety, CTSD- take your pick, but in that moment, with him there? All of it felt irrelevant. I couldn’t advice him anything, nothing seemed safe enough to be trusted. So, in a moment of desperation I blurted out “close your eyes and take deep breathes. Forget everything and everyone else. Forget where or how you are or how much it hurts. Just…breathe”. He uncurled from the ball and sat down on the footpath. I sat beside him.

See, all of us can have a million reasons to worry about things constantly- all of which seem “practical” enough to worry about. Me? I was thinking of my college applications, my board exams and puny little time-table while approaching him. And then, like a hurricane, this incident blew it all away. I sat down there, with him, in silence. And ,whenever my thoughts about these urgencies would disturb my meditations, I followed my own advice- Breathe.

As we sat there, for what seemed enough to be a lifetime, I remembered something. I saw this amazing form of beauty around me, nah, I felt it. I experienced a very strong connection with everything. With Manav, with the dog that lay at the edge of the road in front of us, with a stranger walking down the street in front of me…everything. I remembered that this beauty, this strong sense of being, of survival is what had persuaded me take up an interest in creativity and expression. This was the reason why, even after being a part of the challenging A-levels and IGCSE curriculum, I kept on drawing, photographing and writing for leisure, for any breathable minute I could spare. I remembered… I want to, through as many ways possible, convey this beauty to masses.