

November 2015

Dear Friends,

A couple weeks ago, our Vice-Principal Siddharth Sir wrote this free-verse poem about our school. I was surprised when I read it because almost all the incidents described in this poem occurred in one week! Sometimes even I forget what a special school I serve. This poem was a good reminder and I wanted to share it with you. For your information, Siddharth uses the phrase Mr. G to refer to God (from the book title *Mr. God, This is Anna*). Below the poem, I've also included a few photos of Children's Day which we celebrated on Nov 14th.



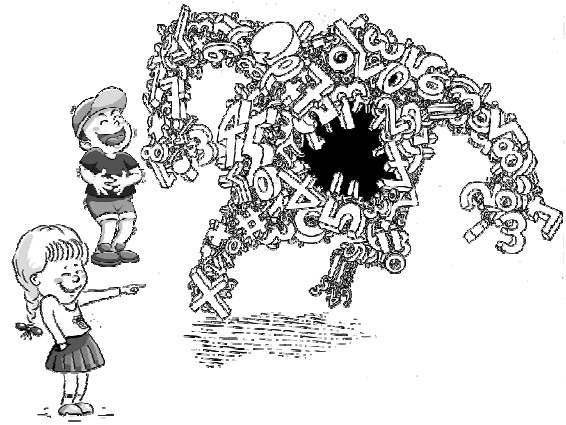
आशा दीप विद्याश्रम

*My dearest beloved Night
have I ever told you what the grey/blue-eyed angel really does?
No! I have not.
That's a pity.
Let me tell you the story of a school today.*

*Please do not make those awful faces
you do not look good with them my love.
Listen to my story
and then make faces.*

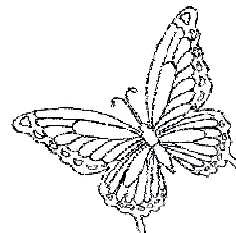
*The grey/blue-eyed angel runs a fabulous and amazing school.
It's not a school for magic,
but it's a magic school
a hundred times better than Harry Potter's school.*

*It's a school where math starts with Math Monster.
Please don't shake with fear on mention of the Math Monster!
This poor chap is a sweet and huge invention of the grey/blue-eyed angel
depicting the horrors of math
When the children see him, they laugh
and his power of terrifying disappears.*



*It's a school where they actually dare to send messages to Mr. G
hanging onto a few helium balloons
and humongous hope.*

*It's a school where a pupa becoming a butterfly is celebrated as the birthday of a magical being
which, can you believe,
came out
with all its magic and riot of colors
from that scrawny little pupa?
Believe me, it really happened
and we all became part of this magic
since the grey-blue-eyed angel decided to make us part of this magic.*



It's a school which looks over the river
or the river looks over it
and which has four dogs and
a bunch of monkeys
as part of its extended family.

It's a school where, if a monkey comes into the office
he is asked gently to leave
and the monkey actually leaves.

It's a school where kids clap
after someone tells them the news
from the newspapers
on Wednesdays.

It's a school where kids invent noisemakers
from bent hangers and discarded string
and, while the teachers have great awe for it,
the awe is kept secret from the children
as it is too dangerous to have open awe
for such acts as bringing a bomb explosion to school.

It's a school where everyone learns
from a five-year old child
to a sixty-year old lady.

It's a school where kids get gifts
of hugs and high-fives
when they come to school
and when they go back home.

It's a school where, from time to time, you find a shoe in the drinking water tank
or some school crayons stowed in someone's backpack
but the next day
these kids are not horrified
to come back to school.
When they come back
then somewhere there is a solemn promise that
today I will not dip my shoes in the water tank.

It's a school where the grey/blue-eyed angel
sows stars at the beginning of every year
and harvests them at the year-end.

It's a school where kids sometimes dance at the beginning of their classes
and some teachers weep in the teachers' meeting
because they feel bad
about a kid's family situation.

It's a school where we all eat together in the afternoon
and the sun
shining on us
basks in the warmth of our love throughout the day.

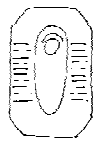
It's a school where kids,
at least most of them,
love to stay after school
and study
and nearly try to kill us all
with wanting more and more help in studying.

It's a school where you see hope, joy, and faith
taking birth
right in front of your eyes.

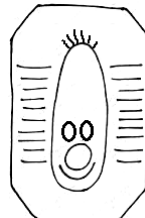
It's a school where broken, beaten, and battered souls
are healed, soothed, and reborn.
It's a school where no matter how much darkness you are coming from
as you come here
you enter light.

It's a school where if you fall in a hole
of your own making or doing
you will always find a pair of hands
and a set of grey/blue eyes beckoning you
to come out.

It's a school where bathroom passes
have smiling toilet seats
with six strands of hair on their heads.



before



after

It's a school where you can dare
to dream,
hope,
chase rainbows,
be a star,
make mistakes and learn from them,
fall in love with butterflies,
learn to laugh,
and learn to believe in the promises and true love of Mr. G
for us all.

It's a school where Mr. G smiles his most radiant smile,
where there is the true magic of grace in the air.

This is where I work,
a most avid, wide-eyed, and bedazzled fan.

This is where I found Mr. G living in his true form.

*As this story ends, I am sharing a secret with you people
so please do not tell this to my beloved Night.*

*But, as a matter of fact,
by the end of this story,
she was ready to go to the grey/blue-eyed angel
right then
and ask to volunteer in her magic school.*

~.

We celebrated Children's Day on November 14th by holding art competitions (with prizes!) and games. Here are a few happy children . . .



Neha, 8th class, won first prize in the hand-decorating competition.



She's almost done!



*Kids trying to throw small blocks
into a basket.*



*It was a fun
day for me
too! Here I am
with Anuradha
(8th class) and
Ankita (7th
class).*

I read an interesting book about a month ago: *The Beautiful Tree* by James Tooley. It is a well-researched book that seeks to show that small private schools for the poor (like ours) are a good way (and a superior way in comparison to government schools) to increase educational quality and reach in developing countries. If you are interested in education, and especially reaching the goal of education for all, I would recommend this book to you.

I wish you all a happy and heartfelt Thanksgiving!

love,
Connie