



# St. Joseph's University

## The Literary Society & The Department of English

present

### THE SJU PERSONAL ESSAY CONTEST



## Theme: Songs I've Forgotten

Deadline: 12th Feb, 2023

Mail entries to: [barbranaiduprize@gmail.com](mailto:barbranaiduprize@gmail.com).

Open to school/college students & general public

Please contact Prof. Vijeta Kumar (9741057203) for further queries

# The SJU Prize for the Personal Essay 2023

## Theme Songs I've Forgotten

ORGANISED BY THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
ST. JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE

### About the Prize

The SJU Prize for the Personal Essay has been instituted by St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru, with the intention of inviting insight into everyday experiences. The contest is open to students in school and college, and also to members of the general public. Three prizes will be awarded, and the entries shortlisted by the jury will be published in an anthology each year.

### This year's theme: Songs I've Forgotten

There's that song you thought would never stop playing in your head, and that other one you decided would be the background to your life, playing surreptitiously when you stayed up all night, giggling over unsent text messages. Then there's that song that slowly left you without proper goodbyes when the person who came with the song also left.

Question – where do these songs go?

So often, things from our past jump us in the middle of an ordinary day because a word, a tune, a lyric from a forgotten song props itself so forgivingly in our minds that our only recourse is to wait until the ghost of the song returns home.

What is this return like? Is it the song that returns or do we? What happens to an old song when a decade of new experience, new bitterness, new loves, and newer desires are all listening to it along with the old you?

How do we listen to songs now? When the whole world seems available at our fingertips, what passions of memory send us on the uphill task of searching for a song we only know the tune of?

What creature of love led to the creation of Shazam? If it's true that Shazam never lets you forget a song, is it also true that we don't know how to forget songs?

Some people say we become who we used to be at least for a little while when old songs come barging through the door. Some songs have the capacity to exorcise a different self out of us. Some songs make us want to become the person we imagine when we listen to it. How do we begin to make sense of this semi-fluid relationship we have with songs?

We are curious to know how these things worked out for you. Send us your song stories. Your experiences, your observations, are each a key to a new door, a new world that we might share.

### The Details

Ø Participants are expected to write a personal, exploratory essay. The submission must be original and offer a lively engagement with experience. **The suggested range is about 1500–3000 words.**

Ø The contest is open to **school** (Std. 8-12) and **college** students (UG or PG), and to the **general public** (any age). Prizes will be awarded in three categories: Best School Entry, Best College Entry, and Best Open Entry.

Ø Submissions can be sent by ordinary post to **The English Department, St. Joseph's University, No. 36, Lalbagh Road, Bangalore 560027**, handed over in person above, or emailed as a word document to [barbranaiduprize@gmail.com](mailto:barbranaiduprize@gmail.com)

Ø The last date for receiving submissions (in any form) is the evening of **12 Feb 2023**. The entries will be judged by an independent jury of writers.

Ø Results will be announced on **16 February 2023**. The prize-giving will be held on the same day. Prizewinning entries from previous years can be accessed at [www.metajosephs.in](http://www.metajosephs.in)

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