



2nd prize
11-13 years age
group

Name: Vandana R

Age: 13

Bio of author:

Title: Imperfections

Judge's notes: "Great descriptive passages & insightful reasoning."

"A lovely, beautifully descriptive meditation on the world."

Imperfections

The sunset spilled its radiant elixir into the evening, as luminous hues of molten crimson and magenta reflected onto the limpid waters. I gazed as cerulean blue waves cascaded onto the beach, before breaking gently into white foam on the shimmering shore. Buoyant, jade coloured seaweed, floated along the cruising, briny water drifting towards the golden, mottled sand.

Standing up, I ambled along the edge of the beach as my eyes flickered to the swaying palm trees. The robust branches bore emerald, oily leaves, and were organised into unnaturally serried rows, bordering the sea. Looking closer, I realised they were flawless. Meticulously crafted to look "perfect." A human artifice, manmade, unnatural and a complete deviation to what nature had proposed to us.

As these thoughts rummaged through my head, my feet had made their way to feel and see this "perfect masterpiece." Hands outstretched, I gently tore off a bit of the leaves, as my toes lightly upturned sections of the soil. The subtle changes were barely noticeable but stepping back, I instantly felt it looked better. The palm trees had become complete; like a long-lost missing puzzle piece had clicked into place. I had just made something so superficially perfect, truly stunning by turning it imperfect. It seemed convoluted but was really so straightforward. People had spent hours moulding the palm trees to look uniform and "perfect" not realising they just needed to showcase its imperfections to unleash its breathtaking beauty.

Laughing softly, I shook my head. I found it strange that humans endlessly sought to enhance already beautiful things into objects that they were ultimately still unsatisfied with.

I returned my gaze to the now tranquil waters, allowing myself a moment to close my eyes. It was the same ocean, angered on a frigid, stormy night. A churning, lurching monstrous entity, hurling mighty ships with the tiniest, fuming whitecap. I shivered thinking about the thousands of preserved corpses lost in the immensely vast, salty coffin that stretched before me. I suddenly snapped opened my eyes and I was back with the placid, twinkling waters that glinted knowingly in the light of the dying sun.

With a start, I realised what made the sea so remarkable. Its imperfections. The slight unevenness of the irregular waves is what made its beauty heavenly, and the cunning danger of the ruthless waters was simply what allured more and more sailors towards it. Smiling wistfully, I wondered how long I had been blinded to this. The constant shifting beauty standards came as no surprise; it was an ironic, ever-changing cycle.

Regrettably, few recognized that genuine beauty resided within imperfections, and instead, we persistently sought to conceal them. The ocean wore it proudly and it had become the most achingly beautiful sight in the world. Every, single person on this planet had that immense amount of beauty, but no-one noticed it in themselves or in others. Our imperfections were what that made us perfect. What would it take for everyone to see that?