

PUNCHIRI - I

A last token of thanks from Class X-E (2025-26)

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PUNCHIRI – I

A Last Token of Thanks



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एकसर्त
XERT

दशम कक्षा अभिव्यक्ति, मनन एवं चिंतन परिषद्
X (10th) Expression, Reflection and Thought





Foreword

PUNCHIRI is an attempt to capture the everyday experiences, reflections and emotions that shape a student's life, both within and beyond the classroom. It is rooted in the belief that learning is not confined to textbooks, but is also found in conversations, observations and the small moments we often overlook.

This collection moves beyond routine academic expression and encourages a more personal engagement with ideas, relationships and self-awareness. It reflects an effort to connect structured learning with lived experiences, recognising that some of the most meaningful understanding comes from simple, everyday moments.

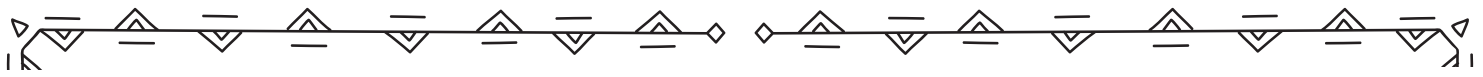
The making of this book has been shaped by the freedom to observe, reflect and express without hesitation. When given the space and encouragement to do so, students are capable of creativity and insight far beyond expectations. Punchiri stands as a small reflection of that possibility.

The title, meaning "smile", represents the warmth and comfort that even the simplest thoughts and experiences can bring. It highlights the importance of encouragement, guidance and shared moments in shaping who we are.

At its core, this book is a reflection of the people and experiences that have influenced us along the way. It is hoped that readers will find something within these pages that makes them pause, reflect, and perhaps, smile.

— Anshul & Anyasri





Acknowledgements

The authors of Punchiri would like to express their sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to and supported the idea behind this book.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our classmates of Class 10-E, whose encouragement, participation and shared experiences played a significant role in shaping this collection. Their support and belief in this idea gave us the confidence to bring it to life.

We are especially grateful to our class teacher and English teacher, who has guided us over the past two years with constant encouragement, understanding and care. Her influence has been deeply meaningful, and this book stands as a small token of our appreciation. Her guidance has not only helped us grow academically but has also inspired us to express our thoughts with clarity and creativity.

The authors also acknowledge the assistance of ChatGPT in supporting the development of certain symbols and in generating questions used within the book. All designs, concepts and written content, with the exception of the XERT symbol, have been created by the authors. The overall idea, planning and design of this book are entirely credited to Anshul and Anyasri.

This work is, in many ways, a reflection of the support, inspiration and memories we have.

— Anshul & Anyasri





Contents

Foreword

Acknowledgements

UNIT 1: THE START OF A NEW END

1. What Textbooks Often Miss

2. [The Isle of Waiting](#)

UNIT 2: IN THE MAKING OF A TEACHER

3. Chiri-Siri

4. [The Trees](#)

UNIT 3: THE END OF THE THE START

5. The Goodbye diary

6. [For Pranitha Ma'am](#)

7. [The Last Photo](#)



1.

What Textbooks Often Miss

Before you read

- *Sometimes, school sounds like it's only about textbooks and the chapters for the exam. Sometimes it gets so repetitive that we actually forget how what we are learning is actually useful in the real world. And one day, perhaps only a few memorable lines will be remembered from these books we spend so much time on.*
- *And while we often dwell on why we need to learn these lessons; we don't focus on what textbooks often miss.*

For a young student, sitting in class, it seems obvious to think that textbooks teach all the important stuff, you know the stuff that comes for exams, the stuff that makes life luxurious. And often for the sake of marks, that's all we care about. But we often forget that textbooks often miss the most basic of humanity 101: how to make someone smile. And it's not their fault half the time. This lesson isn't one a teacher can teach you within a semester or two. It's something you have to learn by yourself.

It's a normal school day like any other. Except that the class runs without a teacher. Students are everywhere. Some are gathered folding pink paper into blooming tulips and green paper into sharp leaves, others are by the board with chalk-smudged palms fussing over which way to write 'Happy Teachers' Day'. Some are by the door making sure the teacher doesn't enter before they're ready and others are practising their lines.

Comprehension Check

- *What activity are the students preparing for in the classroom?*
- *Why does the classroom appear chaotic?*
- *What does this chaos suggest about the students' involvement?*

It's hectic. But that's the day you realise that there's more to being human, something more than fulfilling duty as a student, studying. There's a duty as a friend everyone carries, not as a burden but as a token of being cared for and caring for. So let me take you all to that day, which dominoed a trail of memories.

It was around 8:40. The first period was about to start but we weren't ready for it. We had an impromptu tulip bouquet barely holding itself together, drooping with liquid glue. We had a board, it was done but we wanted more. And the speeches were just drafted. But we had to make haste.

And then, 'Knock, knock!'

Time ticked faster than one might've hoped. I ran up to the door asking the teacher for 5 more minutes as we ran around hurrying it up. But sooner or later, time was up and our scraping-by set-up was on display.

Now I sat there in my seat, as the audience, experiencing the result of our efforts, rather than participating, I was a background character right then, tinkering with the bouquet, trying to make it stand. BUT... there was something about the events that wasn't noticed by the spectators as it was by the stakeholders.

We were left hoping for longer than the day allowed the programme to last. As the last words echoed in the square-ish ninth-grade classroom, it felt missing. All our efforts had wrought only this much?

Comprehension Check

- *Why do the students feel dissatisfied with their efforts?*
- *What expectations did they have from the programme?*
- *Do you think their reaction is justified? Why or why not?*

And in fact, there was no arguing with the truth over there. But the day wasn't important because of the results we had hoped for, and scarcely received. The day was pivotal for the lessons it taught us, the lessons textbooks often miss:

As we sat there, still time left before the bell struck its metallic rhythm in a unique kind of worry, the look on our teacher's face didn't match ours one bit. She was happy, a smile grew cheek-to-cheek. And as our gloom kept us stranded like iron chains, her joy resembled a germinating seed, as the roots of her happiness sprouted, perhaps absorbing more than our eyes noticed.

Perhaps it was never the results but the efforts. Anyone could have done what we did, but only we did. Any person or machine could have copied the results but it takes strength to copy efforts. And in a world where 'AI takes our jobs' fills headlines daily, efforts pay off far more than results. *Lesson 1.*

Comprehension Check

- *What distinction does the author make between effort and result?*
- *Why are efforts considered more valuable in this context?*

Perhaps it was never how long we spoke. We could've spoken for hours and yet the result wouldn't have changed. We perhaps could've spoken for a bit less and the result could have been more profound. Words fleet, but the idea stays. I'm sure you too might have spent far too long pondering on something that happened ages ago, whether it brought peace or destroyed it. I learned that the number of words never mattered as long as what's in our hearts was said. *Lesson 2.*

And most importantly, that smile didn't bring only realisations. It brought satisfaction. That smile fueled the years to come, the years that resulted ultimately in this. That smile showed me a unique joy, not from myself being happy, but from making others happy. *Lesson 3.*

Thinking about the text

1. What does the author suggest about the limitations of textbooks at the beginning of the lesson?
2. What change in the teacher's expression surprised the students?
3. Why does the author say that efforts cannot be copied easily, unlike results?
4. How does the experience help the author understand the meaning of making others happy?
5. Explain the meaning of the phrase "lessons textbooks often miss."
6. What does the comparison between "iron chains" and "germinating seed" suggest?
7. Describe a situation where you felt satisfied by making someone else happy.
8. Imagine you are the teacher. Write a short paragraph describing your feelings on that day.



2. The Isle of Waiting

This chapter ends.
A new one begins?
Old school books pile up.
A mess I'm not ready to clean.
I am stuck here between school and college.
I am stuck here hoping it won't change.
I am stuck here in the isle of waiting.
Memories I'm not ready to close;
Memories I'm not ready to start.
I am stuck here in the isle of waiting.

Thinking about the poem

1. If you were in the poet's position, what memory from school would you find hardest to close or leave behind?
2. How does the image of piled-up school books help the reader understand the poet's feelings?
3. What two phases of life does the poet feel stuck between?
4. What situation in the poet's life does the "Isle of Waiting" represent?
5. What does the line "This chapter ends. A new one begins?" suggest about the poet's uncertainty?
6. What message about change and personal growth can readers take from this poem?
7. What advice would you give the poet about moving forward into the next chapter of life?

Did You Know?

The poem although resembling 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree, ' talks about the opposite themes. Remember what themes William Wordsworth shows in his poem.





3.

Chiri-Siri

*Students may forget the lessons,
but they never forget the teacher who believed in them.*

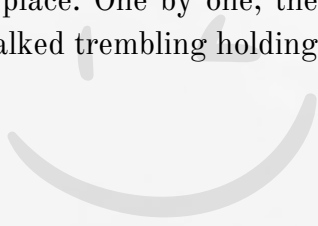
Siri was sitting in the passenger seat of her uncle's car. Staring out through the windshield, her eyes followed the buildings racing past her. It was her birthday that day. And she was on her way to pick up her cousin sister from school. She saw millions of apartments and trees zoom past her, and her feet would continuously tap-tap. And even though that incessant patter didn't end, they were now at school ready to pick Radha up.

Little seven-year-old Siri asked her uncle, 'How much time is left?'

Her uncle answered that it was twenty five minutes past three o'clock; in Siri's words, **FIVE MORE MINUTES!**

I

Siri stood peeping into a class that read IX-E. She didn't know what that meant but seeing Radha there gave her enough confidence that she was in the right place. One by one, the teacher asked them to walk to the front to her table. Each student walked trembling holding a neatly-covered notebook and submitted their work.



Everyone did, except one boy. Looking at him, Siri thought, ‘Hmm.. you could take me and put me on my-ch-elf and only then I would reach hi-ch height. He’s tall...’ That boy’s turn had now come. He walked to the front with nothing in his hands, and perhaps only a cliché excuse.

The teacher, after barely taking a good look, hit him with a metal ruler. For the boy, it meant almost nothing. But as Siri processed what just happened in front of her, as his palms turned as red as tomato, her tip-tip paused... her tip-tip ended.

Comprehension Check

- *What incident does Siri witness in the classroom?*
- *How does the boy react to the punishment?*
- *What effect does this scene have on Siri’s behaviour?*

The bell rang a moment later and by now the teacher had noticed the young girl, who was probably half the age of her students. She stood in front of Siri and knelt to match her height.

In a quiet, sweet baby voice, she asked, ‘What’s your name, dear?’

Siri answered timidly, ‘Ch..Chi-ri..’

‘Chiri dear, what are you doing here, all alone?’

‘Why...Why did you hit the...that boy?’

Comprehension Check

- *Why does Siri question the teacher’s action?*
- *What does this reveal about her personality?*

II

As the teacher stood there... unsure.

‘Siri!’, her uncle shouted, panting, catching his breath, ‘Siriyyamma, go inside and get your chechi.’

Siri, still unsatisfied, went inside as her uncle had instructed.

III

The teacher asked, ‘ Oh... her name’s Siri? She told me it was Chiri’

Her uncle continued, ‘Ya! Don’t mind her; She’s young, you know. She has trouble saying the ‘s’ sound. It’s minor right now and we think it’ll get better soon.’

‘Oh.. and you must be... her father?’

‘Her uncle, I’m here to pick my daughter up.’

‘Pleasure. I’m her Malayalam teacher. She—’

Chiri and Radha walked out of the classroom. And her uncle walked along side Radha, asking the usual questions: ‘How was school?’, ‘When are your exams?’ and so on. Chiri didn’t join them just yet.

Her question needed answers: ‘Why... why did you hit that boy?’

The teacher now stumbled on her words. ‘Well you see, he didn’t bring his notebook today for submission. He.. well... I hit him so then maybe he might bring it from tomorrow at least.’

‘But uh—’

‘You see, pain is a good teacher.’

‘But what if he had a good reason?’, Chiri demanded.

‘Ma Siri, you don’t actually believe that he did it.. and yet managed to forget at home right?’

‘No.. I mean the real rea-ch-on , the one he’d didn’t feel ch-afe to confide in you for... the real rea-ch-on why he couldn’t ch-ubmit hi-ch book’

‘He.. he didn’t feel safe? Amma Siri, your uncle must.. valiyachan...he’s probably looking for you.’

‘But—’ Chiri saw her sister and uncle leave. She ran as fast as she could to reach up with them.

And by now that statement might’ve left Chiri’s mind, in hers now, it was etched.

Comprehension Check

- *What does Siri mean by saying the boy did not feel “safe”?*
- *How does this idea challenge the teacher’s thinking?*

IV

(At her home, scribbling in her book)

‘There was something in what that young girl said today, ‘He didn’t feel... safe’. I thought punishment would... would make them better... more disciplined. Perhaps all this time, it wasn’t their fault. I was constructing uh... a big dam between me and them. Perhaps every time they wanted to reach out, listen, wanted to be guided, I... pushed them off. Maybe... I was wrong.’

V

Chiri by now might’ve forgotten what she did, but her impact was omnipresent in that room. Fixing months of torment is definitely hard. But—

‘Madhav, come here’

‘Ma’am, I-I didn’t finish my notebook. Sorry, I was trying to but I didn’t have time yesterday.’

‘Is Friday alright for you? Will you be able to finish it by then?’

‘Yes ma’am. Thank you!’

‘Moné, go sit and write now..., don’t take too much worry.’

Now it wasn’t words. That smile on his face told her that pain might be a good teacher, but the best teacher, at the end of the day, was kindness.

Comprehension Check

- *How has the teacher’s behaviour changed in this scene?*
- *What impact does this change have on the student?*

Did You Know?

Chechi - Elder sister

Valiyappan - Uncle

Moné - referring to a boy child

Thinking about the text

1. How does the story show the difference between fear-based discipline and understanding-based teaching?
2. What impact did Siri's words have on the teacher's thinking?
3. How does the author use contrast to show the transformation of the teacher?
4. Explain the significance of the line: "Students may forget the lessons, but they never forget the teacher who believes in them."
5. What does the idea of "not feeling safe" reveal about students' behaviour in strict classrooms?
6. Why is understanding a student's situation more important than enforcing rules blindly?
7. Do you think kindness is always more effective than strictness? Give reasons for your answer.
8. Rewrite the ending of the story from Siri's perspective.

4. The Trees

From the soil as tiny little saplings;
To the sky, as big green buildings;
Trees are often a nice metaphor grand
For growth and the flourish-sort-of-brand!

But trees, no matter how mighty and tall,
Cannot sprout without water and all.
And like sunlight and food.
There is a sweet smile stood
To help it grow not for fruits or planking
But rather for the...that sweet little feeling-

And that's what a teacher is in thought
And we're pleased to tell you that for what you've fought.
Now lies there a great grand grove
With everything from honey to stove.

Thinking about the poem

1. What does the poet mean by calling trees a metaphor for growth?
2. What is the "great grand grove" referring to in the poem?
3. How does the poet use imagery, such as "tiny saplings" and "green buildings," to enhance the poem?
4. Describe a teacher who has helped you grow, and explain how they influenced you.
5. What does the "sweet little feeling" mentioned in the poem represent?
6. How does the poem show that growth is both natural and supported?

5.

The Goodbye Diary

Friday, 7th February 2026

12:30 a.m.

And that's the end I guess, the end of my childhood, the end of all this fun...

It's not that I won't have fun again, but I will never enjoy life the same way as I used to. Life changes: the most heartbreaking but precious moral I've learnt so far. And whether for the better or for the worse is well a mystery for me too.

You know it's a funny thing! I'm sitting here writing like my heart is ready to explode on paper. And yet someday I will forget the silver moonlight through my window that keeps me awake. Someday I'll forget the barks of the street dogs near my apartment. Someday, I'll forget this very moment, this very day. And everything about my childhood will be a bunch of muffled memories tied together with struggling effort.

Comprehension Check

- *What fear does the writer express about the future?*
- *Why does the writer feel that memories may fade over time?*



And perhaps one day, you or I will be reading these very words for the 'first' time again. Maybe then, I'll be better off in life, maybe I would've had all my dreams accomplished or maybe not, not that having dreams leftover is a bad thing because the day you finish all your dreams and stop having more is death before cremation. I see myself years further in the future, maybe in a garden with lush-green grass and trees in bronze or chocolate. Again in the same silver moonlight, reading from random texts from a few decades ago; and then I'll be reading not for the sake of conveying my message or learning something new but gathering a few new memories in a wilting bouquet called the 'Past'.

But until then I don't have to worry about forgetting what happened yesterday or today. And that's the funny thing: the same feeling I fight to get rid of will be the same feeling I hope to give myself, those many years after in that garden when all I will want is this.

The 'garden' blooms today in my mind: a garden of memories. A garden, although small in size, is sufficient for what I have to say. It's hard to keep acres alive and even if you try, with a small garden, you can tend to it without the fear of losing because you already chose what was important. I turn away from the glaring moonlight and close my eyes. I can see the memories of school settle as small seeds, which will one day shoot into three-metre trees.

Memories that I spent so much time holding on to will soon be waiting for me. Memories from school, from the bus, from my childhood. And on their long saturated barks will be etched a story.

Comprehension Check

- *How are memories represented in the form of trees?*
- *What do the inscriptions on the bark signify?*

I see myself walking from tree to tree, making sense of etched stories. One tree bark reads: Today, Class 9 started, I got a new teacher. A new chapter begins. That time I probably would've never expected who that teacher actually was, and what she would actually do.

I move slowly, my fingers still lingering on the bark of the last tree soaking if not through my mind, through my body, if not the meaning of what was written, the essence of it, like the worthy aftertaste of your favourite dish. The next one reads: Today, I'm free, it's summer! That day, more than on my paper perhaps I dwelt on the exhilarating water fight I would have in the bus, how I would come home soaked, my mother annoyed but used to it. That sentence 'I'm free' like school was a jail...

Hmm... A bitter aftertaste, I would think. Perhaps I would soon find out that not more than a year after that, I would grow to love school, if not for the learning itself, for the memories it brought, the friends it gave, the lessons it taught: who I am, who I will be and so on.

And after that I found a messy inscription: Today, I gave my teacher a bouquet. It wasn't perfect. But perfection's overrated. She was happy.

'She was happy...'

This tree was different. It didn't bear fruits that matched the sweetness of the memories. Flowers grew from its roots. Tulips, pink with innocence, pink with happiness, and pink cause they could be, not cause someone asked them to be.

The next tree came sooner than I would've hoped. Small gardens are easy to control and to preserve. But you can't get lost in them like tomorrow would never come. It read: Ninth ended and here comes tenth. A fun year it was. And a better one soon ahead. Fingers crossed!

Wow, an entire year of life is now carried by three trees, and together barely a paragraph! Humbling...

Comprehension Check

- *What realisation does the writer have about time and memory?*
- *Why is this realisation described as "humbling"?*

Tenth will start again now. Again, I'll feel the eeriness of a new year, a year that supposedly meant so much. At least this time, I'll know that I've succeeded and maybe only this time, I'll ever want to feel it again. I still have a decent orchard ahead of me. Waiting to be read, waiting to be felt like they were happening again, again but differently.

And then the next tree. It was a simple oak. No fancy branches swirling. No pink blossoms. Just: we learnt about Anne Frank. What lesson would I have gotten from Mr. Keesing? An ordinary day I would think. But it's hard to cherish what days were so special when you don't add a few normal ones, when you could just be you...

The next two trees had flowers by them. From the roots of ebony trees grew pink roses, purple lavenders and of course pink tulips. This time the handwriting was neat.

NOTE TO SELF: The bouquet didn't fall apart. Cut the stems deeper. They really support the flowers better. Teacher's day was fun! Or at least how much we had of it.

The latter read: Children's Day + Happy Belated Birthday. A combo I would've never known I needed.

I looked down. Just admiring the flowers, how their stalks from paper turned real. How the flowers actually bloomed, and had that organic fragrance that real flowers carry. How I would no longer have to worry whether they would wilt or the paper would age and crinkle. Or if it would all fall apart before my teacher even saw it. Those flowers now forever reside in the garden of my heart and perhaps in the home of my teacher.

And now two barks grew intertwined, not like fingers crossed but a gateway, a metaphor, that sprouted a massive green crown. On one of the timbers, it was written: Last day of tenth. I don't know whether to be happy. I'll miss everyone. Good luck!

I opened my eyes now, it was late. The moon seems exhausted. Its face was tired and wrinkled. At least the gibbous it had left was. I will stop now. Not because my garden stopped. It would continue to grow till my heart was satisfied. I stop now because whatever memories I have to re-experience are still ahead of me. At least I have hope that just like the other ones, it'll be all okay!

Thinking about the text

1. Why does the writer compare memories to a small garden instead of acres of land?
2. What realisation does the writer have after reading the line, "I am free, it's summer"?
3. Why does the writer believe that ordinary days are important to remember?
4. Why does the writer decide to stop writing at the end of the diary entry?
5. If you were to add one more tree in the garden of memories, what moment from school life would you write on it?
6. What does the writer mean by the phrase "a bunch of muffled memories tied together with struggling effort"?

6. For Pranitha Ma'am

From class 9 to 10,
You've been with us
Longer than some we call friends.

When the road was dull and unclear,
You've been with us
To guide and steer.

You've cared for us.
You've put up with us.
You've been with us.
You've stayed with us.

When they made us doubt or run
You've been with us
Saying, "No, not my children!"

Through any moment, thick or thin,
You've been with us
"Gone mad?! Alvin"

For all you've done for us and
For every time you stayed—
We want you to look at us
And remember —
We would do the same.
We would do the same.

Thinking about the Poem:

1. What does the line “You’ve put up with us” suggest about the students?
2. What promise do the students make to their teacher at the end of the poem?
3. What does the repetition of the line “You’ve been with us” suggest about the relationship between the teacher and the students?
4. If you had to write a poem from a teacher’s perspective responding to this poem, what would you express?
5. How does this poem show the difference between a teacher and a mentor?

Did You Know?

This poem has exactly 22 lines representing the 22* students of class 10-E (2025-26)

7. The Last Photo

And these are our last formal words,
and these are our last memory.
But that doesn't mean they come alone.
You've got a class photo to remember, you see.
A photo we'll stop matching as years flow,
but a photo we'll never forget!
And this marks the end of 2025-26.
And we hope another 'us' will come along.
But till then,
this is the end, you see,
The End of the Start.

Thinking about the poem

1. What does the poet mean by “our last formal words”?
2. What does the line “a photo will stop matching as years flow” suggest?
3. What emotions are expressed in the poem—nostalgia, hope, or closure? Explain.
4. What memory would you want to preserve from your school years forever?

Did You Know?

‘Us/We’ in the poem refers solely to the students of Class 10-E(2025-26) whereas ‘our’ refers to the students and their teacher. What is this phenomenon called?



08/01/2026

GOODBYE~

We are the luckiest to have you as our teacher for the second time. We'll all miss you so much.

Teekshika 10E

Ma'am, I don't think we say this enough, but you've truly made a difference in our lives. The way you explain things, the way you never give up on us, and the way you somehow manage to handle all of us every single day—it honestly means a lot more than we show.

And of course... "by my mercy you are in this class" is something we'll never forget That line has become a memory in itself, and honestly, it just shows how much you care (even when you're being strict with us).

Some of the best moments we have in class are because of you—whether it was a random laugh, a small scolding that turned into advice, or the times you pushed us to do better than we thought we could. You've shaped not just how we study, but how we think and grow as people.

We might forget many things as time passes, but we'll never forget you—the teacher who guided us, believed in us, and yes, kept us here by your mercy. Thank you for everything, ma'am. We'll always be grateful.

Harshitha Vemana 10E

Dear Pranitha ma'am,

Thank you so much for all your guidance and support throughout the last two years of my school life. I will always be grateful for your encouragement and what you've taught us. I wish you unlimited happiness and success just like how you make your students content everyday

..

Miss you a lot!!

Avigna 10E







1911



दशम कक्षा अभिव्यक्ति, मनन एवं चिंतन परिषद्
X (10th) Expression, Reflection and Thought