

Young poet launches first book of prose

Real Bios.

KHAN, Gulmehek

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Gulmehek Khan, 12, is a young poet with an old soul.

Her first book of prose, *Flowers*, was published in December, when she was just 11 years old. She started writing poems at 7.

Inspired by her family's move between Mississauga and Dubai, Gulmehek tackles life, success and bullying in her collection – themes she said came from her lived experience, her feelings “and from my wisdom.”

“I started to write about all my observations (of) nature, people and life,” said Gulmehek. “I write things that have the morals of life ... Nothing is more precious than life itself. Some people say, ‘I want a life of success. I want this, I want that.’ But it’s all just life: Life is the best.”

“The grass is green on both sides.”

It all started out as a hobby, really. Gulmehek – who was inspired by her great grandfather (also a poet), Bollywood actor Salman Khan and Edward Lear – said she would go to her “special thinking place” and simply write them down. She never imagined how far her words could go until her mother, Naureen, collected 170 of her finished works and started shopping around Dubai for a publisher.

Motivate Publishing took on the project in January 2015. It is available for purchase on Amazon. Money from the sale of her book – 300 copies and climbing – will go toward an anti-bullying campaign at her Nord Anglia International School in Dubai.

“I thought I should donate the money so people encourage kids to stand up to bullies, so they don’t get scared any more,” said Gulmehek. “I learned that you have to stand up for yourself ... and always seek the help of someone you trust as much as you need to.”

Gulmehek Khan is believed to be the world's youngest published poet.

Bernard Weil/Toronto Star



She said she thought other kids could learn from her experience, which is why she wrote about it. Today “there are no bullies left” in her life, she said. “I’ve faced them all down.”

Overcoming bullying and publishing the book has made Gulmehek proud, and even, she says, has grabbed the attention of the United Arab Emirates’ ruling family. A few of the poems are about Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the prime minister and

vice-president of the UAE and Emir of Dubai. He remains a big inspiration to the young poet.

Gulmehek, who plans a Canadian launch soon, says she’s working on a series of stories about a tiger named Furball that she hopes to pitch as an animated TV series.

When she grows up, she wants to continue writing poetry and to become a veterinarian. But right now, she’s focused on preparing for Grade 7.