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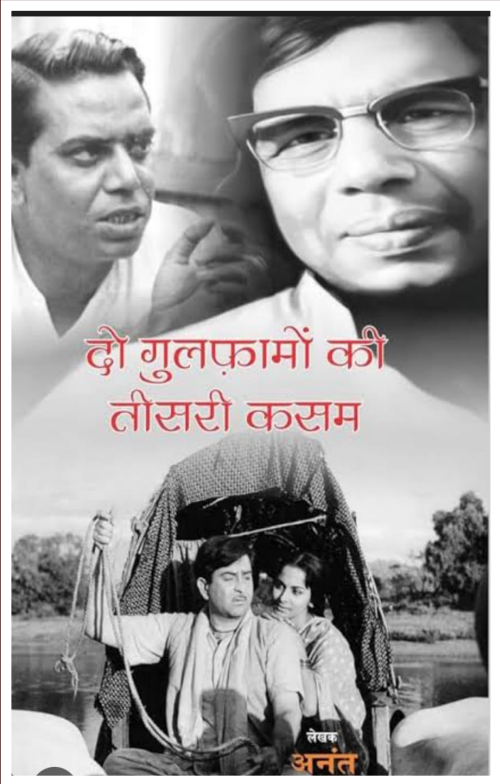
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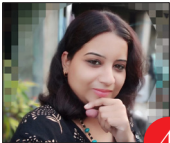


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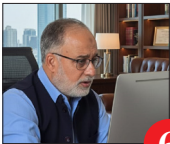
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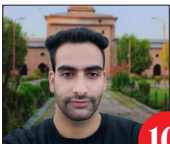
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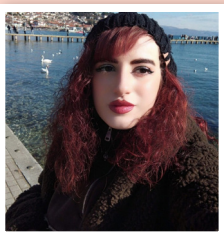
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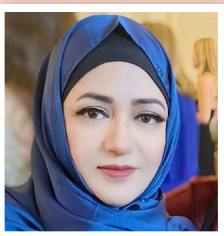
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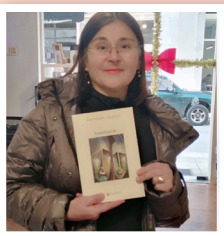
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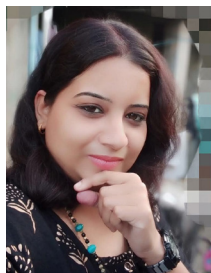


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Women's Empowerment

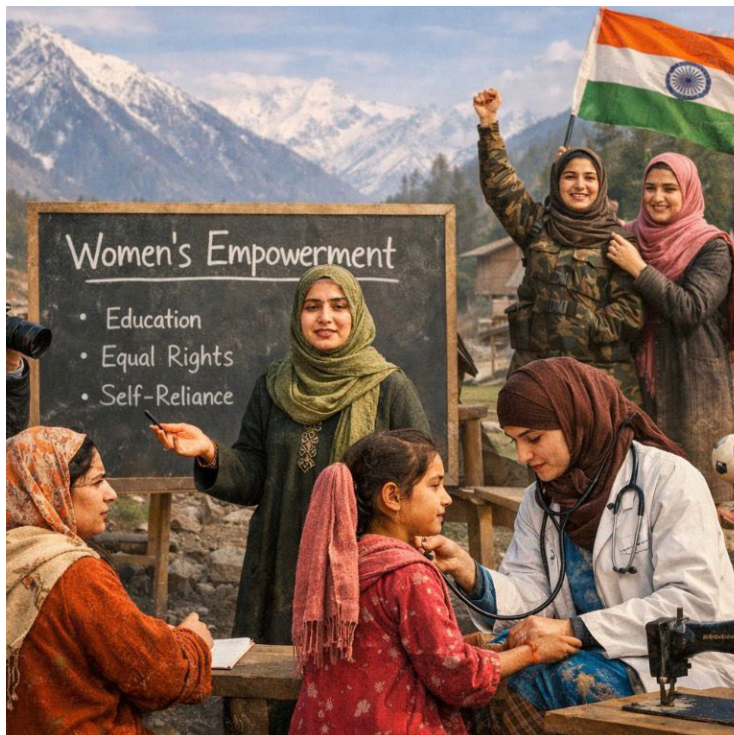


Aditi Chattopadhyay

Life is long journey, every step is very important in this long journey. We are living in a society. In our daily life we are focused in our own life, then we deal with many types of people surrounding our life. In this era of globalization we see people too much busy in their work. From our childhood time to a youth we go on fighting for every essential thing in our everyday step. If we specially notice, we see girl's life is fraught with too many difficulties. In today's world, 4-5 year old girls are too much mature and advanced. They look serious in their attitude.

They go to their school, tuition, musical school and playground and lots of other places. They go to meet their friends or to play in the park. In the fast going life their parents are too much busy. But the girls take care in focusing on their study and career development. This time we are alert to create situations to teach the children good values of life and dignity of labour in place of wasting their time in game apps or in the mall and food restaurants seeking junk food. Girls are found to have PCOS syndrome for taking too much junk food and lazy life style.

Boys carefully tackle many tough situations, but girls are getting much more serious nowadays to handle problems of life. A girl whenever her age is 11 to 12 they look more responsible than their male counterpart, because this time a girl knows that she will one day be a mother. So definitely they become too much conscious & serious of the challenges.



Now in this AI dominated age and the age of Chandrayaan III, people are moving fast, but still it is seen that the thought level of many people is too low and not at all progressive. Even today in our society some people stick to old age dogmatic thinking that women are only born for child birth and baby nourishing. Women are a sexual chattel and a cook. But a woman after getting good education can be a good home maker.

In the rural areas villagers regard we saw the girls a burden. They keep the girls so much busy with their domestic house chores that they cannot concentrate on their education and career development. The old mindset is despicable. Girl children are born for being good cook and a good maid servant of a man's home. Day by day the world is growing advanced, the economy, the industry and technology all are

changing. But the backward people who believe in superstition hinder the progress of women and girl children.

Education is more powerful, education can be the game changer for the whole messy situation. In our society, we can safely conclude one thing. If light of education is spread, every door will be exposed to radiance of enlightenment.

A farmer's son will not become a farmer, a doctor's son will not become a doctor. Nelson Mandela says, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." If we look at our great men, we will see that all great men of India's Renaissance, Raja Rammohan to Vidyasagar, fought for women's education. In a patriarchal society, the expansion of female education was not encouraged even a few decades ago.

Ashapurna Devi has shown us

how the marginalised women fight for education. Ashapura Devi's brother's used to sit and read. At that time, she would sit on the opposite side and identify herself with the letters by looking at them. In our society, child marriage is curse. A girl is married off before she can understand anything. A girl who enters the world of marriage becomes a mother before she can understand anything.

Nowadays, with birth control, it is also a kind of survival. In the old days, many people lost their lives prematurely while giving birth because there was no way to control birth. All over India a girl's marriage without dowry is really a big big problem. In dowry cases we see gruesome events happening, and for dowry a woman is killed by her husband and his family. Sometimes young girls are also victims of this crime.

Another serious disease of our society is rape. The body of a woman who is raped becomes impure, but the people who raped her not blamed as impure. Nothing can be more ridiculous than this idea. Day by day people are getting more and more educated. We are hopeful that the people will be able to shed their taboos. We are hopeful that the mind of every educated person will shine like the rays of the sun. Time will be changed. So we are hopeful.

We believe that expansion of literacy and inculcation of moral values will change the superstition, taboos and false ideas. Women's are flourishing in every sector, even in science and technology. Women now fly planes, even Rafael, and women come out as President of India. Women are pilots and doctors. Women are leading the Bollywood and in India women are good parliamentarians. Women no longer lag behind men.

(Aditi Chatterjee is a regular columnist in Bengali newspapers published from Tripura and Bengal. She writes on female issues and emerges as an inspirational influencer.)

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their roles as educators and learners while navigating the moral dilemmas of the times. Hope endures, but it is fragile, constantly tested by the harshness of reality.

Like many traditional societies, Kashmir grapples with patriarchy, gender oppression, enforced silence, the commodification of women, and the repetitive cycle of abuse. The story's central metaphors—the parrot and the cage—are striking and effective. Zainab, the protagonist, repeatedly addresses the parrot, saying, "You are my soul, and I am your cage," suggesting that the bird mirrors her own trapped existence. The emotional impact intensifies at the end, when the parrot attains freedom while Zainab remains imprisoned, a conclusion that is quietly devastating.

These motifs lend the narrative strong emotional resonance and cultural authenticity.

Zainab's suffering is continuous and systemic. Her father, steeped in patriarchal values, is disappointed at the birth of his first child because she is a girl. Although the Kashmiri society (this is true of the entire Subcontinent) has changed to some extent, the preference for a male firstborn persists, along with unequal treatment of daughters and sons. Before marriage, Zainab is chastised in her parental home as someone destined for an unknown household; after marriage, she is treated as an outsider in her in-laws' home. Her father sees her as a burden, her husband as a commodity to be sold for personal gain, and Jabbar, the local goon, as an

object to exploit in exchange for favours. When she refuses both her husband's and Jabbar's demands, she pays a heavy price: the loss of her husband and humiliation before a hostile academic committee during her viva voce. She narrowly avoids losing her MPhil degree only because a courageous and honest senior intervenes.

Despite its thematic strength, the story suffers from weaknesses in pace and structure. The narrative is episodic, moving abruptly from one scene to another without smooth transitions. The refrain "You are my soul, and I am your cage," though evocative, is over-used and loses some of its impact. Certain episodes—particularly the viva confrontation and Jabbar's exaggerated villainy—feel melo-

dramatic, loosely structured, and rushed. There are also avoidable technical flaws, such as the spelling of “synopsis” as “Synopsis,” which is difficult to justify, unlike “Terrar” for “Terror,” which can plausibly be attributed to usual mispronunciation in Kashmir.

These shortcomings, however, do not overshadow the story's emotional depth and social relevance. 'The Cage' remains a moving, meaningful, and thought-provoking work that forcefully exposes the silent suffering of women within a rigid patriarchal order. This is not our problem alone. Despite rules and regulations, women continue to feel dominated and subjected to varied kinds of exploitation. This way, 'The Cage' assumes a universal significance.

Where Love Has Gone



Vandana Kumari Jena

It has been eighteen years since Mrinalini left me and she has not communicated with me ever since, but I still go to the mailbox with eager anticipation on every birthday, as I did this time. It is empty, as usual. I feel a pang of disappointment. It feels like a short sharp stab of pain, although I know that the postman hardly delivers post these days. People now send things through courier. Or Speed post. Or through Porter services. When we were living together, she used to send me a birthday card and a gift on my birthday, although we lived in the same house. The card and the gift were delivered by the postman. He had known me for years. He delivered the gift by hand. He rang the doorbell, smiled and wished me a very happy birthday, and handed me the small package and the card. The gift was usually small but beautiful, a paper knife, a paper cutter, a small painting, a tablecloth-artistic, beautiful and inexpensive. Her gifts told me much about her. The gift box was tastefully decorated. Only Mrinalini could twist the ribbons into a beautiful rose and tie it on the top. I loved her gifts. I would open the package carefully, smoothen out the paper, and keep it carefully. I would keep the gifts in the almirah.

Mrinalini. Where is she? I tried to look for her, but failed. Mrinalini who smells like the sweet-smelling Myrtle. She wafted into my life on wings of rapture and disappeared soon afterwards. Happiness is ephemeral. It never lasts. I was always the cynic. I always believe it. "Happiness is a state of mind. It is in your hands to be happy or unhappy," That is what Mrinalini the optimist said. If I really think about it, there was nothing spectacular about her, and yet I have never met anyone more endearing.

I met Mrinalini at the park near my house in Vasant Vihar in New Delhi, on her knees, as she peered into the paw of her puppy, trying to remove a pin. I was in the park along with my friend Samay.

Minralini, Samay and I were in college together. St. Stephen's College. The most prestigious college in Delhi. She was everything I was not- affable and charming, a human dynamo who excelled in everything and took part in everything. I was the cynic, the recluse. She was the star in the college play, feted and admired by everyone. I was the one who wrote the play but really who cares about the playwright, unless of



course one is William Shakespeare? A few years later we decided to get married. We both joined the corporate world.

I wish I could say that our marriage was blissful. It was for five years and then Mrinalini became pregnant. "I am pregnant," she said. She was ecstatic. But her stomach had begun to balloon. She looked like a six-month pregnant woman while I had been abroad for six months and had returned just three months ago. She hugged me and said, "Vikrant. I am so excited." She did not see my face darken, nor the myriad expressions that chased my face, not the doubts which hovered in my mind. "We will convert the small bedroom into a nursery," she said. "I will put a blue and pink wallpaper, which will be appropriate, whether it is a boy or a girl. What do you say Vikrant?"

"I say, just tell me who the father is because it certainly can't be me," I could not believe the words would come out so cruelly. Her face turned pale. As did mine. I did not tell her that my mother, who had come to visit us, had planted the seeds of doubt in my mind, had insisted that Mrinalini looked six months pregnant. Mrinalini clenched her lower lip to stop herself from crying, as I did to prevent my anger from boiling over. Her eyes shone with unshed tears, while my eyes darkened and became smoky like a burning bushfire. "Do you realize what you are saying," she asked, her voice calm, the kind of calm just before a hurricane makes a nightfall. I said, "I

mean every word of it. I may not be knowledgeable about pregnancy, but I realize you are about to deliver in the next three months and I returned home only three months ago. It doesn't need a genius to do the math.” No, it doesn't,” she said. “Bye Vikrant,” she said as she walked out of the door, suitcase in hand. She did not even call for a taxi. I saw her cross the road and stand at the bus stop and I did not know whether she took a taxi or boarded a bus. I did not care either. She quit her job and disappeared.

And then she began to come in my dreams. I did not know why. Mrinalini had betrayed me. It was not I who had let her down, then why did I feel so guilty in the years that followed? My mother tried her best to persuade me to marry again, but I didn't. We were never divorced. We were just separated. The truth was I could never forget Mrinalini. Her presence pervaded the entire household, even when she was not there. However, after eighteen years Mrinalini was just a memory.

On this birthday, my forty-eighth, eighteen years after Mrinalini left me, I heard the doorbell ring. A courier boy stood at the door. He had a red cap on his head and wore dark glasses. He carried with him a small parcel wrapped in a blue gift paper and ribbon. I opened the paper hurriedly, even as he turned away to go away. The box contained a note which simply said, "Liked your gift?" I removed the tissue paper lining the box, but the box was empty. Why did Mrinalini

send me a gift after eighteen years and where did the gift go? "You!" I shouted at the young man who did not have a motorcycle, or a cycle, which courier boys usually have. He was walking towards the bus stop. "You," I said to the delivery boy, "The box is empty." He turned around and said, "Empty?" He put his hand on his head, running his fingers through it. "Empty?" He said again, as he removed his dark glasses. I looked at him in amazement. He was the mirror image of me. The way I looked years ago and not now, and then I realized that he was the gift. "What's your name?" I asked gruffly, dragging the words that seemed stuck somewhere deep inside my throat. "Rishabh," he said, as he looked closely at me. "Mrinalini, where is she? I asked. "She died a month ago, but she had wrapped up this gift and asked me to hand it over to you personally." I noticed a slight twitch in his left eye. Mrinalini had noticed it in my eye too. It was a tell. She said it told her when I was being creative with the truth, a polite way of saying when I was lying! Mrinalini was alive. My gut said so. I was sure that had she had passed away I would have known. The twitch in Rishabh's eye said so too. "My son," I said, drawing him into an embrace. He struggled free. "I am a posthumous child," he said. "My father died seven months before I was born. My mother said so." "Mrinalini, where did she work when she was alive?" I asked. "When you kicked her out of your life you lost the right to know anything about her," he said. "Where are you going?" I asked, wanting to prolong the conversation as much as I could. "That's my uncle," he said, pointing at the bus stop where my friend Samay was standing. I realized that it was Samay who had stood beside Mrinalini as she had brought up our son single-handedly. I had been in touch with Samay over the years. But I had no idea that he was a pillar of support for Mrinalini. I realized that Samay was a better man than me.

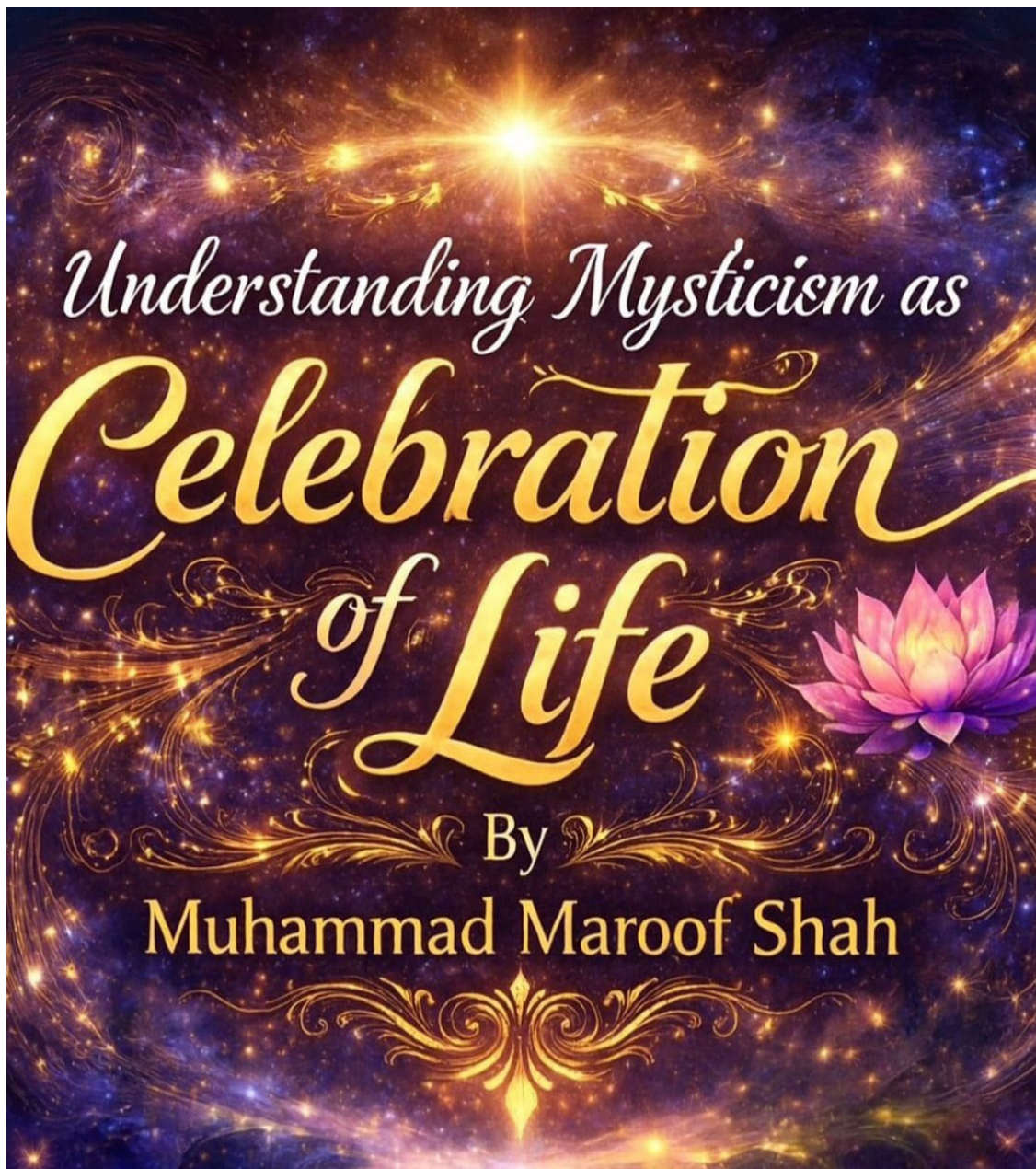
I did not chase after Rishabh. I knew that I could always find Samay and Rishabh if I tried. And perhaps through him I could find Mrinalini too.

(Vanana Kumari Jena is a retired officer of the Indian Administrative Service and an accomplished writer. She has written more than two hundred *Middles* for leading newspapers, including *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Indian Express*, and *The Statesman*. Her stories have been featured in over twenty anthologies.

She has authored two novels—*The Dance of Death* and *Clueless*—along with six short story collections: *The Incubation Chamber*, *The Future Is Mine*, *One Rotten Apple* and *Other Stories*, *Over the Edge*, *Swansong*, and *Angkor Wat and Other Stories*. She has also published a collection of *Middles* titled *In the Middle*. She lives in Mumbai.)



Peter Kreeft



Understanding Mysticism as
Celebration
of Life

By
Muhammad Maroof Shah

(The author has widely published in the journals of mysticism and Islamic philosophy and published a book length critical study on New Age Spirituality.)

THE CROW AND THE CAT



Dr Saima Manzoor

In every aspect, they were as extremely apart as possible. Like day and night, like white and black, like flowers and thorn, like river and desert, like beauty and beast, like good and evil. It was never too difficult for her to acknowledge where she stood on that spectrum. It wasn't even too hard to accept her role. She would be the night as calmly as it was possible. She had no problem in being dark as the darkest hour of dusk. She would accept being a thorn or the desert or the beast or the most evil thing there ever was. The only difficulty was that wherever she stood, it meant that he stood farther away from her. That every step towards accepting herself meant a million steps away from him. That was the problem. A problem that demanded a solution. Any solution. Whenever she thought about this little conundrum, she would close her eyes and see a dark black crow sitting alone on a branch of a barren tree.

Quiet, observing, puzzled, troubled, hurt, sad or maybe just wise. The crow that just sat on the branch, maybe contemplating a difficult flight or a troubling journey, barely moving. Like it wasn't even alive. The crow who had taken far too many arduous flights, gone to extreme lengths and had seen a world far beyond the reach of any mediocre creature. The crow who was able to look at any difficult circumstance and without hesitation had been able to stand with what was right. The crow who had seen far too many struggles, more than enough for its lifetime, more than enough to render it wise. Maybe that is what rendered the crow silent.

Under that barren tree, a little further away, she would see a cat. A beautiful, delicate, adorable cat, with deep colourful expressive eyes, a shining coat of smooth silky white fur having strands of grey hair just here and there, rendering the cat's beautiful white coat of fur to a complete perfection. The cat would walk in the earthy green grass with a gait that was sure-footed, graceful and just as lovable. One would think that the cat had no flaw, it would never tumble or fail or founder or flunk. The cat was infallible. The crow would observe the cat from a small distance, wondering how a creature was able to master perfection so gracefully. The crow was mesmerised by something as ordinary as a cat. But then again, this was no ordinary cat. It was a creature of total perfection, worthy of all love and admiration there ever was. And the crow was intelligent as well as



wise enough to understand the difference between the cat and itself. It looked at the cat in admiration and wondered whether the dreams were any different for the perfect and the imperfect.

"What do you dream about?" asked the crow.

"Happiness", the cat replied, "as it is not only a dream but a necessity, birth-right, to be more precise".

“True,,,, to some extent” the crow thought. “Do you know what it looks like, happiness?” the crow asked, trying to see behind the cat’s big green alive eyes.

"I know what it feels like", the cat replied, extremely certain of it's answer.

“And how does it feel,,,, happy I would guess”, the crow remarked sarcastically.

"Like every living thing is supposed to feel, there is no alternate way to live other than a happy life. There is no reason one should not

be living life to its full and complete glory” the cat answered impatiently.

“And what is it that makes you happy, loving or being loved?” asked the crow with a desire to know the cat more.

“There are more reasons to be happy than just those two. In addition to loving and being loved, I want peace, content, respect as well as admiration. And only when I achieve all of these things, I accept the presence of someone in my life.”

The crow wondered to itself how could just one soul be able to achieve everything! To grant one soul nearly every beautiful and joyous thing while another soul starved until eternity. What a cruel distribution. But maybe it had something to do with the cat's ability to accept happiness that created more room for happiness. The crow on the other hand had never even known peace and joy and love. The crow

wouldn't even recognise it. Maybe that's why the cruel distribution. What beauty does a painite have in the hands of a penurious ignorant! One has to be beautiful to accept beautiful or maybe vice-versa.

"Do you love someone?" the crow asked the cat knowing very well that the answer would never be what it wanted and hoped it to be but still wishing that maybe there might be a tiny possibility of a true miracle.

"Mostly myself" the cat replied with a sense of pride and walked away from the barren tree and towards the garden full of flowers and birds and bees. And the crow kept gazing at the cat until it was no longer in sight.

(Dr Saima Manzoor is currently serving as Assistant Professor at International Institute of Veterinary Education & Research, Haryana. She is a columnist, poet, and researcher)

Fit to Fail: Exploring the Reality of Heart Attacks Beyond Fitness



Dr Sameer Ul Haq
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Heart attacks are commonly portrayed as the predictable result of years of ill behaviour, such as smoking, poor food, obesity, uncontrolled diabetes, and physical inactivity. Previously, there was the notion that if you ate well and exercised regularly, your heart would remain healthy. This narrative is familiar because it instills a sense of control like live well, exercise regularly, and your heart will be protected. However, clinical reality is increasingly questioning this premise. Cardiac incidents have been documented in young professionals, regular gym users, athletes, and people who have no clear symptoms or risk factors. This widening gap between perception and reality forces us to confront an uncomfortable question, what are we overlooking?

Cardiovascular disease continues to be the leading cause of mortality worldwide. In India, the burden is particularly concerning, with coronary artery disease manifesting nearly a decade earlier than in many Western populations. More troubling is the rising number of myocardial infarctions occurring in individuals who do not fit the "classic" high-risk profile. No prior angina. No significant functional limitation. No dramatic warning signs. And yet, a sudden cardiac event. Traditional risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes, smoking, dyslipidaemia, obesity, and sedentary lifestyle continue to be important in assessing cardiovascular risk. They are reliable, evidence-based disease predictions. However, the absence of apparent obesity or sedentary behaviour does not imply immunity. Cardiovascular risk is complex, with multiple systems operating quietly beneath a healthy veneer. One of the most significant misconceptions is equating physical fitness with metabolic health. A person may have a normal body mass index (BMI), exercise regularly, and appear slim, yet nevertheless have considerable visceral adiposity, which is metabolically active fat surrounding internal organs. Unlike subcutaneous fat, visceral fat directly contributes to insulin resistance, systemic inflammation, endothelial dysfunction, and atherosclerosis progression. Atherosclerosis is a silent and pro-



gressive disorder. Plaques can form gradually within coronary arteries over time, without presenting symptoms. Importantly, the risk of a heart attack is not always proportional to the degree of artery constriction. Many acute myocardial infarctions are caused by the rupture of tiny, unstable plaques, rather than substantially occluded arteries. A previously non-obstructive plaque can suddenly burst, causing thrombus development and blockage of blood flow. This explains why people with no past chest symptoms might have a rapid cardiac episode. Genetics has a significant and frequently underappreciated role. A positive family history of premature coronary artery disease raises lifetime risk dramatically, even in those with otherwise healthy lifestyles. Certain hereditary lipid abnormalities, particularly increased lipoprotein(a), are independent and strong predictors of coronary events. Unlike LDL cholesterol, Lipoprotein(a) levels are mostly hereditary and do not respond significantly to exercise. Without targeted screening, such inherited hazards go undiscovered. Chronic psychological stress complicates the situation. Urbanisation, job stress, financial difficulties, sleep deprivation, and chronic mental stress all activate the sympathetic nervous system, increasing circulating stress chemicals including cortisol and catecholamines. Over time, chronic sympathetic activity causes hypertension, endothelial damage, inflammatory alterations, and plaque instability. Even in physically active people, persistent stress can reduce the cardioprotective effects of exercise. Sleep patterns are also important. Inadequate or poor-quality sleep has been associated to metabolic dysfunction, higher inflammatory markers, and increased cardiovascular risk. Modern lifestyles frequently normalise sleep deprivation, yet its cumulative physiological impact



can be significant. The environment also has an impact on general health as well as cardiac health. Most people are aware of these realities, but they prefer to disregard them. Some people care; they eat well and exercise regularly, but what happened was that they suffered a heart attack. When everything appears to be in order, there is often something wrong going on. Changes in the working environment, as well as the need to stay ahead of today's competitive attitude, have left little room for relaxation and calmness. This has an impact on not only their health, but also their relationships with family and friends. Thus, a lot of emotions are piling up in the form of stress, which is one of the leading causes of heart attacks in people who eat well and exercise regularly. Not only that, but stress, smoking, alcohol consumption, and a lack of sleep all contribute to it. Adults need at least 8 hours of restful sleep.

"Eat right, sleep tight, and exercise light" should be this generation's new life philosophy.

None of this reduces the importance of physical activity. Regular exercise improves lipid profiles, increases insulin sensitivity, decreases blood pressure, boosts endothelial function, and reduces cardiovascular risk. However, it must be viewed as one component of a broader preventative plan, not as a guarantee of invulnerability. Many people rely on annual health checks, which include basic fasting glucose and cholesterol measures. While informative, these indicators may not accurately reflect cardiovascular vulnerability. A more nuanced approach may include detailed lipid profiling (including non-HDL cholesterol), HbA1c, blood pressure monitoring, family history evaluation, and, in some cases, advanced markers such as Lipoprotein(a), high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), or coronary artery calcium scoring. Risk categorisation

should be individual based rather than general. Equally important is public awareness of atypical presentations. Cardiac symptoms may not always be severe. Unexplained weariness, shortness of breath, epigastric discomfort, upper back pain, jaw pain, or a feeling of unusual heaviness may indicate cardiac ischaemia, especially in young adults and women. Dismissing these symptoms because one "looks healthy" can result in a delay in vital care. The purpose is not to create fear, but to encourage informed attentiveness. A healthy lifestyle remains fundamental and necessary. However, true cardiovascular protection requires a combination of lifestyle modifications, awareness, screening, and individualised risk assessment. Heart attacks do not usually present themselves. Risk accumulates quietly over time. Recognising this intricacy and responding before any event occurs may be the most effective action of all.

This suggests that we should reconsider public health messages. Instead, of imposing strenuous daily exercise on everyone, we should encourage personalised, moderate, and diverse physical activities. It urges us to listen to our body, strike a balance between activity and rest, and recognise that health encompasses physical, mental, and emotional dimensions. By doing so, we want to live a healthier lifestyle that decreases risks and promotes overall wellness. It also demonstrates the importance of scientific research in keeping us informed about what is best for our health. "Fit to Fail" teaches us that true health is not easy.

The overarching message is that cardiovascular disease is influenced by a combination of genetics, metabolism, inflammation, environment, and lifestyle. Fitness greatly minimises danger, but it does not eliminate it. The heart responds to biology, not appearances or assumptions.

Between Literature and Cinema: Reading Teesri Kasam through Anant's Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam



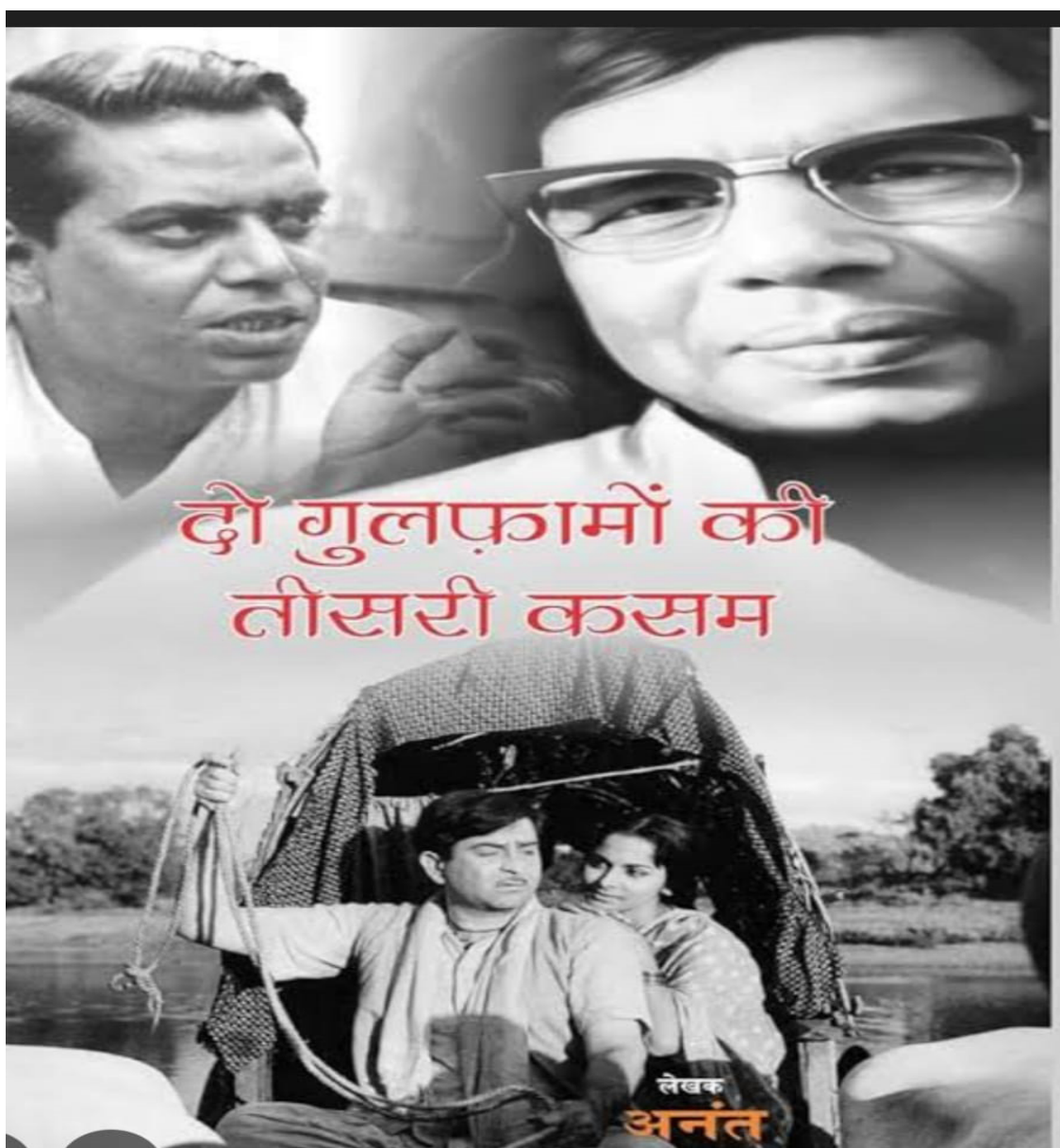
Dr. Purnima

Title: Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam
Author: Anant
Publisher: Keekat Publication
Year & Place of Publication: 2023,
Bihar
Pages: Approximately 240 pages
Price: 500

Indian cinema, despite being one of the largest film industries in the world, remains insufficiently documented through sustained, well-researched, and critically sensitive textual scholarship. While popular narratives, biographies, and anecdotal recollections abound, serious works that investigate the intricate relationship between literature, cinema, folk culture, and artistic sincerity are relatively rare. Anant's *Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam* is a significant intervention in this landscape. The book is not merely an account of the making of the classic Hindi film *Teesri Kasam*; rather, it is an in-depth cultural chronicle that examines how a literary imagination, cinematic vision, and personal commitment intersected to produce a work of lasting artistic value.

At the heart of the book lies *Teesri Kasam*—a film adapted from Phanishwarnath Renu's celebrated short story *Mare Gaye Gulfam*. The film narrates a platonic romance between Hiranman, a simple bullock-cart driver, and Hirabai, a Nautanki dancer. This seemingly modest narrative becomes, in Anant's reading, a profound meditation on innocence, unfulfilled desire, moral restraint, and the emotional textures of rural life. Anant situates the film within its socio-cultural context, emphasizing that *Teesri Kasam* is not merely a cinematic product but a poetic extension of Renu's literary sensibility and Shailendra's deeply humane artistic ethos.

The book opens by introducing the reader to the surreal and culturally vibrant world of Nautanki, folk performance, and rural Bihar. Anant meticulously reconstructs the local ambience that shaped Renu's imagination and later influenced the cinematic language of Teesri Kasam. Through the chapter "Aji Mare Gaye Gulfam" ("The Smitten Gentleman"), the reader is introduced not only to the protagonists



Hiraman and Hirabai but also to the layered folklore embedded in the narrative, such as the story of the boatwoman Mahua, locally remembered as Mahua Ghatwarin. By drawing attention to these folkloric elements, Anant reveals how Teesri Kasam absorbs indigenous cultural memory and translates it into visual poetry.

One of the major strengths of *Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam* lies in its archival depth. Anant does not rely solely on secondary accounts or popular myths surrounding the film. Instead, he traces the real-life inspirations behind the characters, documenting how Hiranman was modeled on a herdsman in Renu's household and how Hirabai was loosely inspired by the celebrated Nautanki performer Gulabbai. The chapter "Kaun Hain Hiranman aur

Hirabai?" ("Who are Hiranman and Hirabai?") stands out for its careful attempt to bridge fiction and reality, thereby reinforcing the film's roots in lived experience.

The book devotes substantial attention to the discovery and cinematic journey of Teesri Kasam. Anant documents how the story reached filmmaker Shailendra through Navendu Ghosh and how it gradually moved from the Indo-Nepal borderlands of Bihar to the heart of Hindi cinema in Mumbai. The inclusion of historical letters—especially Shailendra's correspondence with Renu—adds authenticity and emotional weight to the narrative. These documents illuminate the trust, mutual respect, and creative alignment between the two artists, emphasizing that the film emerged from dialogue rather than dominion.

Anant's portrayal of Shailendra is particularly nuanced and empathetic. Commonly remembered as an iconic lyricist, Shailendra's role as a producer and visionary filmmaker is often overlooked. Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam restores this neglected dimension of his artistic identity. Anant narrates the formation of the production house "Image Makers," the assembling of the creative team, and the collaborative efforts of actors, technicians, cinematographer Subrata Mitra, music directors Shankar-Jaikishan, and others. Through anecdotes and documented incidents, the book conveys the collective labor that underpinned the film's aesthetic achievement.

The chapter “Renu ke Bol, Shailendra ke Geet” (“Renu’s Words, Shailendra’s Songs”) (1997) is a collection of Renu’s

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An Exciting Time: A Review of Introduction to the Environmental Humanities



Dr Tanmoy Bhattacharjee

Book: Introduction to the Environmental Humanities

Authors: J. Andrew Hubbell and
John C. Ryan

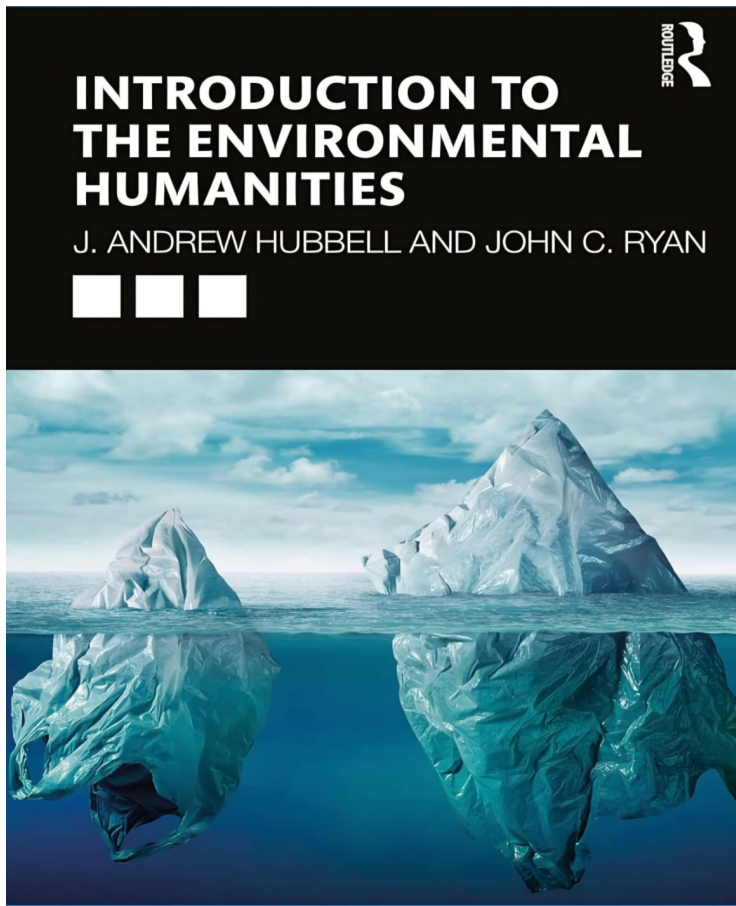
Publisher: Routledge, 2022,
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Price: INR 4369

The emergence of Introduction to the Environmental Humanities is far from accidental. Much like Daniel Chiu Suaraz's recent *Biologists Unite* (2025), which incisively unmasks the euphemism embedded in the phrase "biodiversity loss," J. Andrew Hubbell and John C. Ryan confront the suffocating egotism of human centrism. They write: "Without attentiveness to the other, we suffocate within the confines of our own egotism. We can think of no more powerful way to counter the current culture of toxic individualism, which is the very root of our environmental crises, than cultivating attentiveness. Perhaps climate change, species extinction, and attention deficit disorder (ADD) are all related symptoms of the Anthropocene culture" (50). Although the authors emphasize in their prefatory note that the book is primarily designed for undergraduate readers, its scope extends well beyond introductory pedagogy. Through carefully curated, chapter by chapter case studies, Hubbell and Ryan dissect the "related symptoms of the Anthropocene culture" with precision, provoking readers to grapple with the questions and methods that define environmental humanism (x). The result is a critical work that not only illuminates the entanglements of ecological crisis and cultural practice but also challenges the reader to cultivate attentiveness as an ethical and intellectual stance against toxic individualism.

The tour de force that captivates contemporary academia and unites fourteen rigorously analysed chapters on environmental humanities into a coherent manifesto lies in its unmistakable commitment to multidisciplinary. The authors presuppose that both general readers and aspiring EH scholars must first grasp the broad intellectual context from which this discipline emerged. Thus, they trace the pivotal environmental turn in the post-World War II era, inviting entrepreneurial readers into the layered palimpsest of history to underscore the inevitability of this field's growth. Their



broader aim—sustained with the creative intensity of a Joycean interplay between text and subtext—is nothing less than steering human civilization away from its existential brink. As Hubbell and Ryan themselves assert: “Environmental Humanities is both a product of and an agent in the radical reorganization of knowledge. In another context, we would strenuously defend this reorganization as necessary if we are to reorient human civilization away from its existential brink, a crisis caused in no small part by the knowledge-power division fomented since the Enlightenment” (ix).

Unlike many works of similar scope and temperament, *Environmental Humanities*—beginning with “Reflection 1.1”—redefines its inclusive exclusivity by engaging directly with readers’ everyday experiences, their seemingly ordinary yet significant encounters with the environment, and the many questions that often remain unaddressed. Its appeal is resonant, cascading like a dais toward the audience, especially for the novice student confronted with the opening summons: “Select an environmental issue frequently reported in the media. How might a discipline-crossing, boundary-defying, and policy-focused strategy lead to solutions to the issue?” (6). This meaningful invitation immediately acknowledges the reader’s autonomy, freedom, and potential. As any

good introductory text should, it assures the readership that the critical formulations offered at each "Waypoint" are open to debate, discussion, and even disillusionment.

This is precisely why Hubbell and Ryan sustain a spirit of continuum in their phrasing, never closing off interpretation but instead opening outward: “Put simply, EH opens our eyes, minds, and hearts to the interconnections between all life in a radically changing world” (5). Such an appeal to openness is inseparable from the pursuit of a “good life” for all beings, approached through science, religion, politics, arts, and the humanities alike. The breadth of this vision recalls the shanti mantra from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: “Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah” (Translation: Om, may all beings be happy).

Throughout, the authors are careful not to leave readers misguided, oversimplifying, or distorting meaning. For instance, in the chapter "Ecological Literary Studies," as they explore the idea of "being at home in the world" (181), they invoke Gary Snyder's *A Place in Space* while emphasizing the fundamental implication of "learning to dwell." Like teachers guiding learners through the *modus vivendi* of place in both life and literature, they stress that "the ability to identify with a place is the necessary first step toward developing identity, belonging, and purpose"

(181). Lawrence Buell, in *Writing for an Endangered World*, echoes this concern differently: "That one of literary imagination's traditional specialties has been to evoke and create a sense of place is all the more reason why place should have place in a book such as this" (56).

Most charmingly, Wendell Berry is recalled in connection with the exfoliation of dwelling—a concept at once traditional and contemporary. For Berry, dwelling is the “process of developing reciprocal relations with the biotic community,” and “being at home in the world” is when we become most fully human (182). This idea resonates unmistakably with Rabindranath Tagore’s song: “*Viswa sathe joge jethay biharo/seikhane jog tomar sathe amaro*” (My translation: Where souls unite in joyous wandering, there let my spirit join with yours).

Environmental Humanities unfolds like a broad boulevard, lined with shade-giving trees that offer respite to travellers navigating the ebb and flow of this evolving field. Along the way, readers encounter waypoints such as “Case Study,” “Reflection,” “Weblinks,” “References,” “Annotated Bibliography,” and concise “Chapter Summaries,” each serving as a ready reckoner for deeper engagement. Those who prefer a leisurely pace may pause beneath these intellectual canopies, reflecting at their own comfort, while others seeking more active engagement can turn to the exercises at the close of each chapter for self-assessment and growth. For instance, one exercise invites readers to select a favourite work of literature and analyse its representation of the environment, classifying it through the tropes outlined in Case Study 10.2: is it sublime, beautiful, or picturesque? (185). The experience is further enriched by visual encounters with works such as “Among the Sierra Nevada” (1868), “Little Red Riding Hood” (1911), and “Poppy Field” (1890), which open avenues for grappling with nuanced notions of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque. In this way, Environmental Humanities acts as a whistleblower for new expeditions in a still-flourishing discipline, and its merit strongly calls for translation into many more languages across the world.

(Dr Tanmoy Bhattacharjee, Assistant Professor of English at Women's Christian College, Kolkata, and Post-doctoral Fellow at Lincoln University College, Malaysia, is the author of *Sarojini Naidu: Sufi and Bhakti Influence*. He is the editor of *Understanding Environment, Eco-Tales of India*, and *As Leaves Rustle* (Spadina Literary Review, Canada). He is currently translating *SabarKatha* under the *Rupkatha Project* in collaboration with ULB, Belgium. He can be mailed at tanmoy.cu06@gmail.com)

"Paradigm Of Feelings"



Elpiola Lluka

When I first came to this place,
my thoughts inked full of colours...
Unending letters my brain embrace,
as papers gave me creative powers.

Where the sunbeams shine the most,
soul is resting on its laurels;
In darkness the feelings improve lost,
By bird's chirrup they're smelling florals...

In hearth of my chest the fire is burning,
all my thoughts are annihilated...
The heartbeats in purple are turning,
reminds me bunch of memories decimated...

Beyond skyline we meet the past,
across the soul it is nurturing...
Fighting itself in pathway so fast,
and shot an arrow in heart luring...

By then the glory crimson is showing,
blended with ashes and flames...
Feelings as arrows are bowing,
In love battle the heart always blames

(Elpiola Lluka, from Albania is a globally published poet. She got many awards and lives to write on Nature and Society)

The Divine Smile



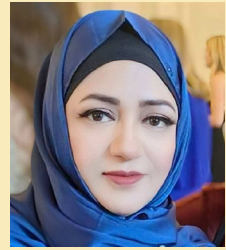
Professor Majrooh Rashid

The sunshine
of the divine smile,
blossoming
on the petals,
of the ebony brown rose,
at this hour of dusk,
took
the frozen black night
within,
by a pleasant surprise.
At first
I thought it was a vision,
the next moment I felt it all.
The ice melted away,

the flow of waters of life
into the eternal ocean
of primeval dream
that Adam and Eve saw
at first sight.

(Professor Majrooh Rashid is a trilingual poet, critic, and academic. His profound and multifaceted contributions to the world of Contemporary Literature is reflected in his extensive publications in Kashmiri, Urdu, and English. He formerly served as the Head of the Kashmiri Department at the University of Kashmir and Director Habba Khatoon Centre for Kashmiri Language and Literature Islamic University (IUST)

In Search of the Vanished Pulse



Sayeeda Sharmin

I walk through avenues of illuminated glass
Where faces glow——
But no warmth travels between them.
The earth still turns——
Faithful to its orbit.
Yet something in the human chest
Has forgotten its rotation toward mercy.
We have perfected the architecture of towers,
But dismantled the architecture of tenderness.
We speak of progress
While compassion lies archived
In forgotten chambers of the soul.
Once, humanity was not a concept——
It was breath shared,
Bread broken,
A trembling hand held without calculation.
Now the air feels crowded
Yet strangely uninhabited.
I search for the pulse——
That subtle tremor
That once echoed
Between one heart and another.
Where is the pause
Before harm?
Where is the silence
That listens before speaking?
Where is the tear
That refuses to remain unfallen
At the sight of suffering?
Perhaps humanity has not died——
Perhaps it has thinned
Into a whisper
Too soft for hurried ears.
We have grown louder,
But less alive, more visible,
Yet less present.
Our words have multiplied;
Our presence has diminished.
We connect across continents;
Yet remain strangers ——
Within arm's reach.
I do not accuse.
I stand among the same forgetting.
For humanity does not vanish
suddenly it erodes,
Each time ego is chosen over empathy,
Each time indifference outweighs care,
Each time convenience silences conscience.
And yet—— somewhere,
In a room where no one is watching,
Someone forgives.
Someone feeds the hungry quietly.
Someone weeps for a stranger.
And in that unseen moment,
The pulse returns.
Perhaps humanity is not a monument to be
admired——
But a fragile flame
Demanding constant tending.
If it feels absent——
It may be because, It waits
To be rekindled, within us.

(Sayeeda Sharmin is a Canadian Sufi poet. She has authored over thirty-six books and fourteen hundred poems. Rooted in a Sufi literary lineage, her poetry explores divine love, ma'rifat, suffering, and inner transformation. She has received numerous awards, including recognition from the Canadian government, and is the Founder and Chairperson of Angeena International Non-Profit Organization.)

AMONG THE ODES OF TIME



Maria Kolovou Roumelioti

Time, you make me hurt...
What do I owe you?
You offered me cloudy water
As medicine, to drink! ...

And I, the mortal, walked
With a thirsty body
My hands built the sky
My feet the soil!....

I left my armor
A nest, for what will come
And responsibility always embroiders me

With what I have suffered!....

My roots dry up
I watered them with tears
Inside me, the soul is a sea
That had only salt!....

The temporary envied me
I fell into delusion
In tragic irony
Slave of the undertaker!...

In the pains of time
The truth falters
Mud fell into the eyes
And the world collapses!....

All the beautiful things are over
The hourglass is empty
In time the shooting
I will find the new homeland!....

(Maria Kolovou Roumelioti is a Greek Poet and her poems are published in global anthologies and magazines)

IS ANYBODY LISTENING

Rafiya Sayeed

From under the rubble of shredded dreams and broken promises, she is sobbing beneath the heap topped with tiles of shimmering lies.

The crushed humanity is bleeding,
is shattered into million pieces that
float in and out the cloudy waters
of red rivers and grey lakes.

I catch a whiff of broil and blood,
snow and sorrow, greenery and grief,
meadows and misery, hope and horror,
treachery and tragedy in her breath.

(Rafiya Sayeed is a writer and educator from Kashmir. She writes poetry, essays and review works. She is inspired by nature and simple life experiences to write her verses. Her work has been featured in various anthologies, newspapers and online literary magazines.)



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