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Department of English and Cultural Studies Central Campus

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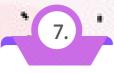
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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It takes an immense amount of hard work and team spirit to publish a magazine such as this. It only stands to reason that we take the time to acknowledge those who helped us achieve this success.

We thank Dr. John Joseph Kennedy, Dean, School of Arts and Humanities, for his unquestioning support. We also take this opportunity to thank Dr. Anil Joseph Pinto for being our unwavering guide. We also extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Shobana P Mathews, Head, Department of English and Cultural Studies, for encouraging us at every step of this long journey. We also thank Dr. Joseph Edward Felix and Dr. Sreejith S, the coordinators of the MA program, for lighting the way for us and always lending us a helping hand.

Finally, we would like to thank the entire Quill's Will family and all the individuals who gave us the greatest honor of being a part of their creative process by submitting for this month's edition.

Thank you.







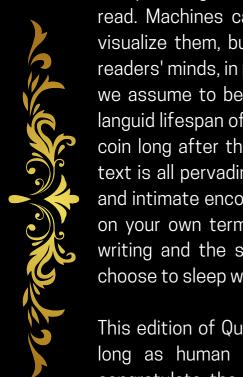
#### FOREWORD

Writing gives gossamer wings to language long after the imagination or experience has taken flight. There's always something you cannot catch and so much more left fluttering, you know not where, after the ink has dried up or the keys have stopped pounding across the page. Writing is always an organic process to most of us, never written, only waiting to be read. Machines can type and print out the text, reproduce them, even visualize them, but the text has an existence of its own, it lives in the readers' minds, in popular imagination, in relationships with the world which we assume to be external, in public opinions, in private whispers, in the languid lifespan of a word or phrase which clatters on dark sidewalks like a coin long after the cash registers have stopped ringing for the day. The text is all pervading, but mostly permeable... It's perhaps your most open and intimate encounter with reality because it allows you to create reality on your own terms. The text lies dreaming between the fitful hours of writing and the suspended hours of reading. You can rouse from it or choose to sleep within the pages ... either way you are part of it.

This edition of Quill's Will reinforces my hope that the text will live on as long as human experience does, no matter what form it takes. I congratulate the contributors, editors, artists and mentors behind this initiative for not losing the scent of Ted Hughes' "Thought Fox" and for letting me imagine the hot breath of its cold nose on the frosty panes of a distant window, from where I am 2

Dr Sushma V Murthy
Assistant Professor
Department of English and Cultural Studies
Christ (Deemed to be University)
Central Campus







#### NEWSLETTER

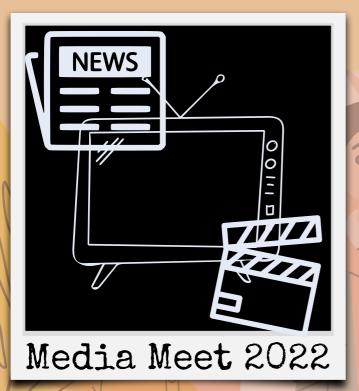


International Conference on Digital Space, Ethics, and
Digital Humanities- Department of English and
Cultural Studies, Central Campus

A 3-Day Conference on Digital Space, Ethics, and Digital Humanities was organized by the students of MA English with Communication Studies with Dr. Rolla Das as the Convenor from 11 April 2022 to 13 April 2022. Dr. Padmini Ray Murray, Dr. PP Sneha, Dr. Dibyadyuthi Roy, and Dr. Rashmi Sawhney were some of the keynote speakers. Paper presentations and panel discussions were conducted as moderated by Dr. Mithilesh Kumar and Dr. John Joseph Kennedy. The conference also marked the introduction of the ELTAI Committee i.e. English Language Teachers' Association of India.



Mélange 2022



Media Meet 2022

Media Meet 2022, the annual flagship conference of the Department of Media Studies was inaugurated with a splash of symphonies, with the inaugural address from T M Krishna, in the main auditorium. The Meet was from the 25th to the 27th August, 2022.

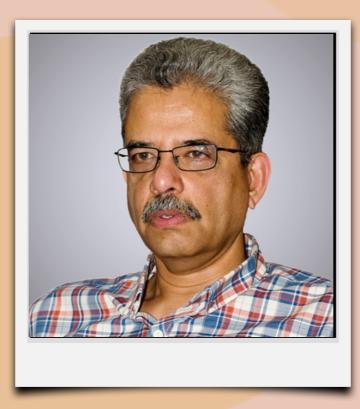
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### NEWSLETTER



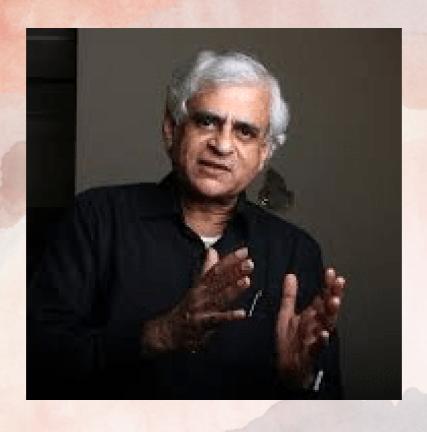
INTERACTION WITH AN AUTHOR: SURESH MENON



The Center for Social and Policy Research (CSPR), in association with the Department of Media Studies and Library and Information Center organized a guest lecture by Suresh Menon who is an author, a journalist, and sports writer wherein he talked about one of his recent works, "Why don't you write something I might read?". The session was moderated by Dr MM Padmakumar and felicitated by Dr. Fr Joseph Vaghese. It was held on 02 September 2022 at 03:00 PM in Bangalore Central Campus.

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# Debunking Society with P Sainath



Palagummi Sainath is an Indian Journalist reporting on rural areas and has written about poverty, structural inequality, caste oppression and discrimination and farmers' protest. He is also known for his book "Everybody Loves a Good Drought." He founded an online platform in 2014, People's Archives in Rural India (PARI), that deals with social and economic issues, caste discrimination, poverty, and the aftermath of globalisation in India. Sainath was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2007 for believing that "journalism is for people, not for shareholders."



#### An Interview With P. Sainath

1. In an interview with India Together, you were quoted saying, "change will happen when some of the basic failures are addressed." As we're in the wake of a new decade, what do you consider a fly in the ointment that we will need to address to catalyse change and development?

All these are loaded words, what we understand by development and what we understand by change, but when I said that change would happen, the fundamental problems will be addressed and will engage with it. In fact, what has happened is that the basic problems have been enlarged because they are not addressed; they are celebrated. The latest inequality report came out of Paris, where Luke Chancell and others show us that we are looking at our worst inequality since the height of British Imperialism. Maybe after 1870, this is the worst inequality we have. The analysis that I did of Forbes Magazine data was not on inequality but wealth. In that magazine, it shows that in the pandemic, when the economy shrank by 7.7%, according to the government of India, independent economy experts say that the shrinking is much greater than that, around 10-15%. But let's say the government of India says GDP shrank by 7.7%; in that same 12 months, 140 Indian dollar billionaires doubled their wealth, reaching \$596 billion. In fact, at the start of the pandemic, there were \$102 Indian billionaires. In 12 months, we added \$38 billionaires, and the whole lot of them doubled the combined worth of Indian billionaires from 243 or something to 596, 94% is the actual increase. Now you can't say that this was from a growing economy because the economy shrank so.

It means the only way they could have grown their money so much was by squeezing it out from below and sucking it upwards. Yeah, that is the kind of inequality, and I don't even think that number was taken into account in the world inequality report. They were on different time tracks. Okay, so, when they come to that kind of level, when you're looking at 140 individuals whose wealth accounts for 22.7% of your GDP, that is, by the way, 140 is 0.000014% of your population. And all the studies that are coming to show you that more than 70% of the Indian population suffered an income decline during the pandemic period. So this level of inequality, The Times of India wrote an editorial saying there is nothing wrong with inequality as such, but they just have to grow the pie, but these people doubled their wealth while the pile was shrinking, which shows you that that was never the solution. Indian Express wrote sort of supporting Nirmala Sitaraman's budget saying sound steps, etc. These were the two editorials from two of the most important newspapers in the country. Hindustan Times likewise was supportive of the budget, where health expenditures are reduced, a lot of welfare expenditures are reduced, NREGS expenditure in real terms has fallen. If you adjust for inflation, all the major things on which you should be spending. So, the basic problems have been enlarged and not addressed. So, all changes that take place will be of an extremely regressive and negative nature.



2. Recently we've been talking about the Mizoram Assam border issues, except that it has not been covered in the media at all. Do you think we're living in a post-truth era where media is no longer driven to the cause centric journalism?

These are cliches; lives and fraud were always part of the media. They have become incredibly greater because ever since the media was taken complete control of by corporations. When media run for private profit exclusives, even for a corporation, the bottom line is they're not there to cover you and tell you what's happening; cover Mizoram and tell you what's happening with Mizos and the brute tribals in Mizoram or Assam or anything of the sort. Nor the Rohingya. that was a very minimalist coverage. They cover what earns them revenue. Yeah, Katrina Kaif for Salman Khan, they see that as giving them revenue. So, IPL gives them revenue; you're getting much more coverage for an IPL match than for a Test match that India plays nationally. So their entire effort is based on profit.

#### 3. So what is your take on this tokenism and the representation of minorities in the media?

I think it's very important, but I think that what you see in the Indian media is not even tokenist; it doesn't qualify. Representation is an extremely serious issue. Now just look, I'm saying that the Indian media, by which I always when I use that word I'm talking about the dominant media, not the exceptions, not the alternatives, not the independent ones but dominant media, which is essentially corporate media who control most of the circulation, most of the viewership reach. It's actually mass media without masses, which means they have the greatest reach over mass audiences,

but mass audiences do not get to determine anything of the content that appears in those media. Those decisions are taken on the basis of their needs in advertising and stuff like that because the media are run on the ad-based revenue model. Which I felt from the 80s was dead already. It showed you how dead it was during the pandemic when industry mediawhen industry advertising collapsed and media became twice as dependent on government advertising which was withheld when you started covering all the media covered deaths in the rivers; the body is flowing in the rivers of UP. Then the government shut off its ads, and the central government shut off its ads, and suddenly, that whole issue disappeared. Nobody talks about covid mismanagement under Yogi Adityanath, and nobody dares to. Because they are beheld to that source of advertising, and it's like nobody talks about Reliance or Adani or Amit Shah's son because you can't. You're frightened that they will shut you off in various ways. Now when the farmers were protesting for more than a year at the gates of Delhi, every second slogan of the farmers took the names of Ambani and Adani.

Did you see that in the newspapers or on television?

If you visited Shinghu, there was no way if you heard slogan-shouting that you could miss these names. But look, Ambani is a great example. All the major newspapers supported the farmers. Read the editorials of The Express saying; you've been bad with the farmers, you need to talk to them sweetly, you're all rustic idiots, just talk to them, they don't know anything, you know, farmers don't know anything about farming. That's what The Express editorial writer does, and they would say all this and say the government failed to persuade the farmers, and in the last two paragraphs, they would say but do not roll back the reforms are very important. For whom were very important?



They were very important in a positive sense for Ambani, Adani. They were very important in a life and death sense for the farmers. Yeah, they're rolling back was very important. Okay, though, it doesn't solve the agrarian crisis. They're being rolled backwards.

So, did you see a single newspaper or channel that gave you simple numbers like I'm giving you now?

Because I put it in the Parry and the Wire, Mr Ambani in the pandemic, his personal wealth personal, not Reliance, his personal wealth grew 129%, and Mr Adani's personal wealth grew to 467%. Mr Adani started from a lower base than Mr Ambani, so he's still about half of Mr Ambani, but the two of them, yeah, grew at 129% and 467%. None of these newspapers told you that Mr Ambani's wealth, which was at that time 84.5%, what am I saying, \$84.5 billion that is is equal to the GDP of Punjab.

Did you see that figure in any mainstream publication or channel?

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4. In an interview with Deccan Herald, you said that the campaign against CAA is a mere campaign, but the movement is not a mere campaign but a movement to prevent the replacement of the constitution with Manusmirti. Do you think that the Covid crisis has silenced the campaign and given a privilege to the establishment to shut down the dissent by launching new policies?

The covid pandemic has privileged the elite, as I showed you, by doubling the wealth of the top 0.000014%. It privileged them in every sense of the word; it privileged them in the pandemic, it privileged them in everything that the richer people grew richer and, of course, that will challenge all the campaigns. The greatness of the farmers' protest was an inspiration to all the other struggles they held up. They stayed there during the worst winter in 40 years in Delhi, maybe more than 40 years. They held out there during a blistering summer. They held out there in awful rains that you should have seen the slush and crap at Shinghu and Tikri. And they held out through the pandemic. With COVID 19, they lost 700 farmers. Yeah, they lost 700 farmers. They died in this period, and yet they would not relent. The government withdrew the laws only because the elections were coming and it was becoming too big; by withdrawing the laws, they succeeded in defusing the anger around the time of the election; they will try reintroducing them backdoor afterwards. So, of course, it affected the CAA, it affected the farmers' struggle, and it cost them 700 lives. It affected a hell of a lot of people and will naturally affect the marginalised, the weaker, the less privileged sections worse. So it affected the CAA protest. Remember that the CAA protest was used to clean out Shaheen Baagh.

5. In the backdrop of the farmer's protests amidst the precarity of the pandemic, the government's insensitivity to negotiate favourably was



#### appalling. Do you think pro-corporate inclination is the only elephant in the room in this regard?

I think that the corporations drafted those laws. Corporations have drafted a lot of legislation in this country in the last several years. They have drafted telecom policy, so they have drafted the government's bills and moved for the dilution of LIC, the most important corporation in your country, public corporations. LIC is not a loss-making body; it's a body that, over the last 70 years, has contributed the equivalent of 2-5% of your GDP. It's just that the super-rich can't stop salivating seeing so much of our money ready to be handed over to them. They talk about loss-making, but it is mostly the profitmaking sector that they have privatised.

Air India by the way, why did it make a loss? It made losses because when Mr Praful Patel was there, you had 2-3 ministers of aviation who have had shares in private airlines. And Mr Patel ordered 100 aircraft for an airline that was making losses which ensured that it could never come out of losses. Now those 100 aircraft are going to be handed over free to the new owners for nothing. One of the highest profit-making corporations in India, what was called VSNL, before you guys were born with our centre, Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited, that has become your Tata telecom. Tata telecom was given Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited at a price of 1800 crores. When VSNL had a bank liquid cash, they held a cash balance of 3600 growth. So essentially, you were giving the corporation a gift of 1800 crores of public cash, plus VSNL sat on some of the best real estate properties in the country, all of which also got handed over.

Remember when Air India gets handed over, all its facilities, properties, land, real estate,

hotels, everything gets handled. They will pump money into a place just before they are privatised. Be a sinner which they are going to privatise.

Do you know I'm saying I'm a rural reporter?

I have until a year, or two years ago, I only used BSNL. Yeah, they did not allow BSNL to go to 4G. They did not allow BSNL to function in the major cities. They did not allow BSNL to function in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, so that Reliance, Jio could take those markets, and they gave the excuse that they are planning a straight transition to 5G. So, BSNL vented now. I travel and I'm going to Chattisgarh in the next few days, and the only telephone that works there is BSNL. Now you handed that over to Jio, Airtel and others, so I'm going to be using a BSNL line handed over to private corporations, leased out to them and that you've killed BSNL. You had your pandemic, every single Indian knows the truth that you say 485,000 deaths; Anyone multiplies that in their head by a factor

Now, why your health system is one of them in large countries?

of 6-10. You know that your fingers are bogus.

Your media will not show you that. They will not

make a very special effort to show you that.

It's the most highly privatised health system in the world. The amount of public input is very little, and so 84% of all expenditures are out of pocket expenditures by Indians. Your health expenditure as a share of your GDP is less than 1.28%.

Bangladesh does much better than you, and they did much better than you in the pandemic. When the pandemic broke, capitalist countries like Ireland and Spain immediately nationalised the entire health infrastructure in the pandemic's first week.

Why did they do that?

Because they knew that the private sector is based on profit, we have closed government



hospital after government hospital and privatised the management of hundreds of government hospitals in Mumbai alone. We have privatised major government hospital management.

6. You received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts in 2007 for your passionate commitment as a journalist to restore the rural poor to India's consciousness, moving the nation to action. Thirteen years down the line, how far do you think India's consciousness has come in terms of the development of its rural fabric/affair?

Again it's a loaded word of what we consider development. If the government, the establishment of world. the corporate considers the bullet train from Ahmedabad to Mumbai as a development. It may even be that there are cases where a faster transport constitutes development, but this is purely bonanza for contractors just and corporations. That's what it was about, and it destroys the farmland of God knows how many farmers whose land has been acquired at preconstruction prices and not at the value that it gets when this happens. So again, you're gifting things. That's how your 140 guys doubled their wealth, outside the pandemic also.

Please understand that this inequality didn't come with the pandemic. What the pandemic did was that it gave you a fantastic autopsy of your society. The corpses on the table with every nerve, bone, vein, artery, sinew and muscle in view show you the inequality of your society, the degenerousness of your inequality. That's what it says, and you should be asking yourself at every stage why is it that

we don't get this perspective in the media at the height.

I'll close with this example for you.

Will you agree if I say that the coming of the pandemic and the lockdown meant that the Indian people, more than ever, needed journalism and journalists?

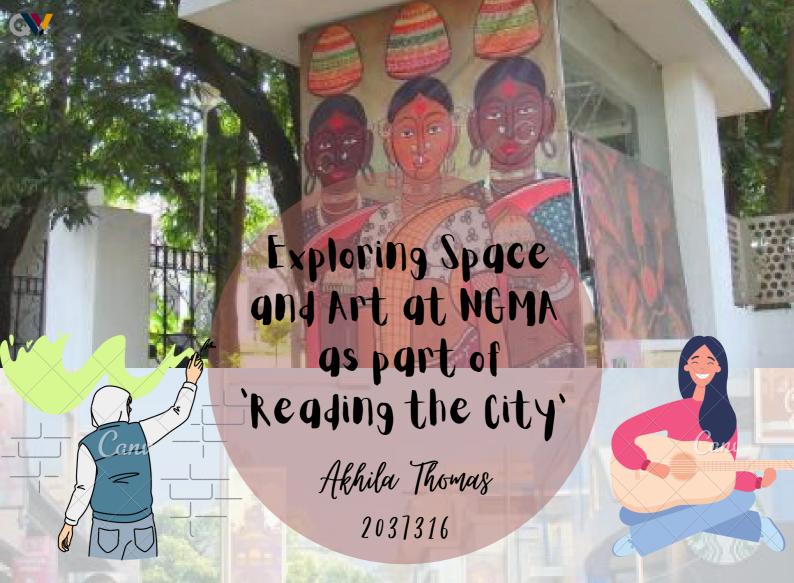
They never needed journalism and journalists more. In the first few months of the pandemic, your major media corporations houses, The Times, all of them, sacked 2,500 journalists when your public needed journalists the most. They sacked more than 2,500 journalists, but we can't count because many of them are very cunningly done. Forced VRS packages, etcetera, but 2,500 journalists lost their jobs, and more than 10,000, maybe 15,000 non-journalist media workers technicians, all of them.

How are you going to cover the pandemic?

They're telling you that we don't give a shit about your public need. This was the opportunity to go in for more automation and mechanisation throughout people. And the journalists who get thrown out are usually the very good ones who have independent minds.



From L to R- Ayushi Dwivedi(Editor), Sera Grace John(Editor), Anagha(Editor), Mr P Sainath, Nivedha(Editor), Raima(Editor)



"Divine Nature gave the fields, human art built the cities." Marcus Terentius Varro, one of ancient Rome's greatest scholars said this and in accordance with this idea, cities become closely intertwined with the lives of their people. Human expression through art, music, architecture, cuisine, rituals and many more such domains simultaneously become the lens through which a city can be understood while also being a reflection or the essence of a city. Taking up such an engagement with the city, students from the course Reading the City visited the National Gallery of Modern Art in Bangalore on 23rd February 2022. The visit was planned under the guidance of Dr Shobana Mathews who teaches the course with the goal of exploring the gallery as a space as well as in terms of interacting with the ongoing exhibition.

The NGMA, Bangalore is housed in a heritage building that was once known as the Manikyavelu Mansion after being purchased by an industrialist from the Wadiyars of Mysore. The rich history that can be traced back to the royal family adds to the aura of the site located in the heart of the city. The ongoing exhibition in the gallery showcased the works of Upendra Maharathi, also known as Shashwat Maharathi. Immediately upon entering, viewers would be drawn to the majestic installation of numerous threads creating an overhead trail that eventually connects with a loom located inside. This becomes the highlight of the impressive exhibition of textiles that carried motifs of temples and other architectural structures weaved into the cloth. The exhibit creates an immersive experience where the



viewers are presented with a traditional art form harmoniously interlaced with the very practice of weaving that produces these works. Along with this, there were also paintings, sketches, abstract art, furniture, unfinished works and even postcards on display. The diversity in this exhibition resonated with the heterogeneity of art in various forms across the city, beginning with paintings in galleries to murals and graffiti on public walls. During the visit, the class was able to spend ample time observing the artworks and discussing them. Time seemed within the compound stop cocooned this space, insulating it from the bustle of everyday life outside. Such spaces

embodying art could slow down the pace of a city, which would then make its experience richer and deeper. This visit also opened up the prospects of the industry of art management and curation which could serve as lucrative and creative career spaces where art and literature intersect. Therefore, this visit was an enriching experience that prompted the class to engage deeply and personally with aspects of the city, taking in various nuances that make up the space and flavour of a city. The trip ended on a hopeful note that this would be the first of many more such visits to come as we embark on our mission of 'Reading the city'.





That owl would come and sit on my window pane every single night. I wonder how it found a shabby, puckered window so comfortable and cozy. I did not know its name nor did I try asking for it. The first day, it scared me. The second day I took its pictures. The third day I was bewildered by its unusual presence for the third time. However, on the fourth day, I got accustomed to its presence. I am not really a bird lover, but how often do I get to be friends with an owl? Sometimes, I just used to stare at it for thirty minutes to capture its stealthy unusual silence and its surreal silhouette. The owl seemed to be very happy with its presently made quarters. I never knew when I got attached to it so much. I used to wait for it to come and take charge of its dominion right after 9:00 pm. Our bonding was very unusual, I was not quite sure whether it actually existed. We had no interest in knowing each other's names nor did we want to intrude into each other's privacy. However, sometimes, when the owl used to be late, there was a feeling of despondence in me. The very next moment it elated my heart by flapping its large elegant wings and perching on that regular specific spot. One day, it did not turn up, so I waited for quite long. I felt sad but did not heed much attention to it. For the entire week, I used to hastily finish my dinner and wait near my window furtively to virtually welcome my friend. It never came. It just disappeared. I falsely accused myself for being the source of disturbance. I knew that it would fly away one day but I somehow could not accept its seclusion with resignation. It went away without even saying a goodbye. I never realized when its presence started comforting me. Do all friendships work like this? Maybe I will forget about the owl after a few days but it still left a heavy dent in my heart and went away forever.



#### Sunday Pelirium Love - Vertigo or a Giddying sense of Happiness?

ANJALI MUKHERJEE MAMCS-B 2137229

I have been rooted in part fantasy, and part reality that is whipped from the remains of the cream of fantasy for a very very long time now. The number of verys have made me wary of my own expectations and ideas that I hold about a lot of things- primarily love.

Even the fact that I am putting these down in words or penning them stealthily is a huge deal for me. For I have flitted away from it, built a home for myself, rarely ever admitting to how I feel about it, what I feel about it and why. But as the magic word of this piece strays in the beginning itself, you may have figured out it is, indeed, fantasy-fantastical. Stemming from the nerd that read books, to the child that penned stories, there's a whole trajectory of how I outlined it for myself. As the storyteller in me grew in leaps and bounds, the fantasy outstretched itself far more than the taut rope of Dreamland could deal with. Ultimately the gaze I hold for love, and love for me, looked a little bit like the personal idealistic statuette that needed to be built from scratch and if not built, perhaps I will never ever accept it, experience it or seek it. Weird, no? Nose, toes, jawline, gaze - piercing or not? forearm, sense of humor yada yada. Unless of course when reality comes crashing slightly harder.

Like it did for me last night. My mother and I were enjoying our nightly binge watch sessions when suddenly she started slumping. As her face started discolouring at a rapid speed and her breath grew hazy, the horrible knot of realization dawned on me – it was a vertigo attack. As I made her half -lay on me, her heavily expensive Vogue glasses gifted to her by her husband lying to the side, I tried calming and nursing her. I scratchily remembered her "quick action" medicines and tried getting them, but to no avail. She finally called for her husband, with whom she had finished bickering just ten minutes back. Almost immediately her husband- my father, called out – turns out he was already awake hearing her shuffling, and came sprinting to the living room.

As I guided him to the medicine box and then to the medicine, a grueling five minutes passed. All this while, my mother lay on me half squeezed, praying and chanting to all the gods she knew and remembered. Her hands slowly started to ease their grip from mine and harden it's grip onto my father's. Her dilated pupils were crying tears of desperation as she clutched on to her husband's shirt and hand.

My dad pressed me on to lay her on the sofa properly. I tried, gingerly. He stepped in finally. Asking me to support her back from the other end, he single handedly lay her down, asking me to arch the pillow well. This wasn't an easy process - neither logistically nor emotionally. It took twenty mins to lay her down. Out of the twenty, my father stood for the fifteen minutes of the ordeal, holding on to my mother like a tree, as my mother refused to let go of clutching my dad - almost as if, if she did, everything in her world would come spiralling down far worse than it has. My father kept noticing my face for signs of panic/action. I discerned neither. He again tried to make her sit up, to make way to bed. As she got up -heaving, panting, crying, a deepest anger at her own failing body, my dad stood and moved like a shadow. He guided her, held her and I will never realize how, strengthened her. As she sat up, she sat for another twenty minutes. Hand clutched in. Husband and wife of thirty five plus years of marriage. Grey Haired. Wrinkled skin. Hands- a little, very very little, shrivelling slightly. Eyes a little droopy. Slackened chests. Legs not as strong as once. But hands clasped tight. I watched with a gnawing sense of emotion as reality hit me and held me and as fantasy showed me the way. Husband and wife sat in silence, only occasionally telling the other it would be ok, eyes closed, hands clutched, a prayer and meditative state enclosing them. The hair had once been black, the skin was once spotless as it still is, the jawlines were taut and the smiles radiant. My parents are/were a beautiful young couple.



Thoughts in Prose | 11

GV

A good deal of my barometer of love perhaps lies in its welting roots here. A good deal of these genes transpired over to my sister, and it doesn't help to feel like a Teletubby then. But who's to stop one's own dreamland, eh? A beautiful young couple, a beautiful old couple. But love isn't to just serve the young. Or fantasy. Love is to sustain the spirit. Love isn't just a gaze that burns or smiles that smear over. Love is, perhaps, being fifty and smirking at the filth of your partner, but nevertheless holding their head, hand and heart as they throw up in the middle of night out of nowhere, without any notice. It's holding your person's hand while they dawdle and slip towards the bathroom while they take a leak, their head throbbing out of its wits. It is teaching your children how to take care of your person, which medicine to administer and when to admonish them. It's about not stepping into the arena, when the other tussles between the children. It's about praying for the other, even if you don't know how to, while you struggle against yourself. Its so many things that I shakily pen down as I watch my mother finish her dinner. I will not stop running in the palaces of my mind, but the next time I run, I shall pause and clutch at the railings of reality that I have been blessed with. After all, who doesn't like a fancy palatial railing to clutch on to while sprinting through its corridors?

To love.

or Whatever that means or seems like.

**ANJALI MUKHERJEE** 







#### Instagram ~











27,338,129 views • Liked by quillswillandteam

#### Riddhi N. Rathod - 2BCOMH A 2111069

I click and scroll, my eyes darting through the row of tabs I've accumulated, Strolling, rather, scrolling through the abyss of pixels, Hypnotized.

Every letter, every sentence, every picture subtly weaves a web around me, Captivating me, isolating me. I trudge on, and I click and scroll.

I glance at my unfinished work, long enough to remind me of my commitments, but fast enough to stall the onset of guilt. I look back at my screen, the web around me now a cocoon.

The screen flashes back a whirlwind of letters, some good, some bad, some terrible. COVID. Crisis. Chaos...I can't look away.

How can I?

The off-tune symphony of thoughts in my head reaches a crescendo; and I wrestle between the need to stay informed, or to preserve my mental peace.

I can't decide, so I click and scroll.

Am I being captivated or held captive? It's hard to break out of the cocoon, now a suffocating grip.

I grapple with my thoughts, and I make the decision.

The symphony stops.

The tabs close.

The screen is now black.

I exhale with relief, free from the cocoon, free from my trance.

A notification pings on my phone, engrossing me, tantalising me, beckoning me to pick it up.

I tear myself away from it

And go to bed.

I am free.

A Department of English and Cultural Studies Initiative

Thoughts in Poetry 13

## Show Business

you cover the bare bones of your being with a frivolous, glittery paper mask, cutting out holes as and when the scene demands it; cast into a film you never agreed to, you memorize the lines fed to you in your cake the itch beneath your skin comes alive every time you're under the spotlight they rip off your coat, burn a hole through your chest with their translucent lies and a blowtorch made of love it never makes sense, even when you feel the blood dripping down your gossamer costume but the music is loud and the night has just begun so you put on the silky gloves toss all your smiles like roses at the feet of people that you never cared for.

Vanshita Dadheech 4 CEP A 2030178



but when the credits roll around and your name is forgotten who will believe when you cry that you were the hero of this film, you never wanted?

we've all seen this ending before - their tears aren't in your name; you're not the star anymore was the blood beneath your fingernails worth the scant words of praise they tucked behind your ear?

the answer to this we know, we know, but the sorrow in the lining of your mouth will never see the light of day - so you fill your glass with more champagne, toast to the villain, there's nothing left to say, you never wished to be on that stage, anyway.

#### POEM Sarbhanga Mishra 4JPEng - 2031327

This is not a poem.

- (i) This is a cotton candy dream in a night weeping fireflies.
- (ii) This is a muse of a drunk poet half past midnight.
- (iii) This is an unspoken prayer that men are scared to spit out.
  - (iv) This is a letter to a never forgotten lover Thrown into the lighted mantle piece
  - (v) This is a cry of a widow breaking bangles

Into the grey evening.

- (vi) It is a plea for help from those broken bangles bleeding crimson into the silent marketplace.
- (vii) This is death searching for a home at mosques in the morning

And at temples after dusk.

Will anyone ever write about

The woman weeping every night

In the pungent room of a brothel

Or a 14 year old who holds a razor against his wrists?

The porcelain breaking under your feet

Like a winter death,

Sudden and cold.

The discomfort of denim ripping apart, —
Thunderstorm and deafening silence
Of art and age-old bitterness.

Bangalore roads drenched in longing, —
A subtle lack of belongingness.

Emptiness like shards of glass

Held together through the kiss of a cyclone.

Novel cracks through walls

Bring in dead dampness into the dark room

But the cracked window

Lets light slice through the emptiness
Of the sour morning.

Death —

Sweet release of the oppressed.

You are a wreck —

More of Bukowski,

Less of Gibran;

More of Hughes

And perhaps a tinge of Plath.

Just drunken nights of rotten infidelity

Leave nothing but sand in your eyes

Burning salvation soaked castles.

The discomfort of holding pennies

Between your fists so tight,

You smell the stinking metal.

This is a whirlwind in the Arabian sea

Leaving grenades in your hands

And an aftertaste of alcohol, gunpowder and grease in your mouths;

Blasphemy and catastrophe with no

Escape.

### Mould you tove me at all?

Siri Shekar 1931371

the stubborn words to my backspaces, the immortal memory to my oblivion, the tears to the back of my throat, the evergreen garden to my pavilion,

countless metaphors for the existence of you, analogies for the stimulations you elicit, and yet just your name is all that it takes, for another death, a revisit.

you're a rope and i a knot, you sleep, and i rot, would you love me more, in the delusion, if i'm caught?

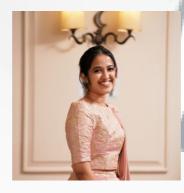
i am diving into the waters, i am dying in deathless poetry, for the love of god, let me drown, for my prayers outnumber a rosary.



## Meet the Tenn



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