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An Ordinary Evening

Sara Khan

I do not remember when the evening lights became an ordinary part of my day.

There was not a single evening when I decided that I shall go to the balcony whenever the sun starts to set. There was no announcement and no promises made to myself. It just happened.

Maybe that is how important things come into our lives.

They arrive quietly.

Without asking if there will be space for them.

The balcony was never something beautiful to me. It was a small and humble part of my house. There were walls around it, a railing and the noises of the street below. I watched birds fly by return to nests I assumed they knew better than I knew mine.

Yet every evening, when the sun began to set I would find myself there.

At first I blamed it on the desire to see the sunset. Later I understood that really I was going to watch myself. Every evening was vaguely similar from where I stood on that little balcony.

The sun would go down,

the sky would change colors

and the noises of the day would slowly start to calm.

Somewhere between the first fading light and the complete disappearance of the sun I would relive the day I had lived.

Some evenings I would come to the balcony happy.

They were the best evenings.

I stood there with a win in my hand thinking of what had gone well. Maybe something I had struggled to finish had finally been done. Or perhaps I had received some good news. Maybe it was nothing special really. Only that I

had somehow managed to survive one more day with a minimal ability to enjoy it. Those were the evenings when the sunset resembled a celebration. As if the sky knew.

It is strange how little we sometimes need to experience a day as good.

The completion of one task

a good conversation

a laugh at the right moment

or even just

a moment of peace and a hint of hope.

There were also evenings when I arrived at my balcony as a completely different person than I left it.



Some days I had spent the day thinking endlessly.

Thinking about the future and the past.

Thinking about things said and not said,

things done and not done,

who I was and who I might be,

thinking about who I might not be.

I would spend daydreaming and then at sunset find myself surprised to find that the day had already ended.

That was one of the balcony lessons I think.

Sometimes I was not tired because of the day I lived. I was tired because most of my time had not been invested in the present. My body had been here and now while my mind had wandered elsewhere. The sunset would come regardless and it would not wait for me to finish wondering. There were evenings when I was hopeful. They were probably my favorites. Hope has that magic trick up its sleeve where the ordinary looks extraordinary. Same skies that had been grey the day before suddenly seemed endless. Same winds that had blown just as hard also felt gentler.

On those evenings I would think of the things that had not happened. The places I still wanted to see. The things I still wanted to do. The person I still wanted to become. For a few minutes everything seemed possible.

There were evenings when I had nothing.

Nothing special had happened. Nothing particularly bad either. Sometimes I was just hungry. Sometimes I was annoyed. Sometimes I was so tired that I just wished the entire world would leave me alone for a change.

Even those evenings became part of my nightly ritual.

I think I began to understand that life was not made of important days. Only of days that seemed unimportant to us at the time.

An ordinary Tuesday. An uneventful afternoon. An uninspiring meal. An unimportant conversation. A sunset that barely seemed worth noticing.

Perhaps it is not the moment that defines the value of an experience but rather the time when we come to realize that it was valuable. It is one of those things time does to us. Makes us grasp at the moment only to find that it was worth grasping at all when we can no longer do anything about it. There were evenings when I stood there and looked at the versions of myself that had walked the day before. The girl that had fretted over silly things that no longer seemed to matter. The girl who had wanted things she no longer wanted. The girl who thought that days had stretched for eternity and who now realized they had been too short. She did not know she would grow out of those feelings. I did not know it either. None of us really do. We live as if eternity was a place we would visit in the present. We postpone happiness and relaxation and conversations and noticing. Tell ourselves that we will enjoy things when life becomes better. When exams end and the next goal is achieved. When we become the person we want to be.

Then one day we stand in the balcony and remember that the day we wanted to escape had become one we wanted to live.

It always frightened me a bit to realize that I had spent so many evenings waiting for life to begin. How many ordinary moments had I failed to notice because they had not been filled with the magic I thought only the extraordinary could bring? I was so consumed with the future that I felt the present was just a waiting room for the real life. The balcony started to teach me that the sunset was always there regardless of whether I had done enough that day. It did not ask whether I had fulfilled my duties to the world or if I had made it proud. It only left when I was already there. Whether I had done everything or almost nothing at all.

There was something comforting in the fact that the world did not demand that I earn the sunset. It only asked that I notice it. So I began to notice things. A flower that was not the most beautiful in the garden. A bird on a lonely wire. The laughter of people below. Sunlight on a surface. Rain waiting to fall. The tired eyes of people who somehow managed to smile. The smiles of people who thought no one was looking. I wonder if beauty was not something that screamed at us to notice it. Sometimes I thought it waited for us to look. Perhaps that was the lesson the sunsets had been teaching me all along. Not to stop dreaming or working or trying. Not to give up on what I wanted. But to stop believing that the present only had value when it became something else. I still worry. I still overthink. I still have days when I feel like I have done too little and nights when I think nothing will ever be good enough. The balcony never took away those feelings. It only gave me space to notice them and to stop running from something I could barely understand. Ask myself questions I could barely answer. I still think about the future. About how I will feel when I am older or when I achieve that goal I believe will make me happy. Maybe I will one day stand once more on a balcony and realize that the day I wanted to escape had become one I wanted to live. The sky will change colors yet again. Birds will return to their nests and somewhere in the distance a sunset will end. But for a few minutes I will find myself there. Watching. Breathing. Living. Not living for a moment that will never come but living inside a moment that will never be repeated. Perhaps that is one of the things the balcony means to me. It is not a place. It is a reminder. Of the fact that some of the ordinary days we dismiss will become the extraordinary moments we wish to return. I remind myself that life rarely presents itself as an event. It is sometimes found in sunsets and evenings and in the beauty of ordinary things. In the songs of birds and in the lives of people who pass by. In those things that last for a few minutes and then are gone. So now when the evening comes I sometimes find myself on the balcony. I am still not sure why. Perhaps to watch the sun disappear. Perhaps to see the day that has passed end. Maybe I go there because somewhere between the fading light and the approaching night I remember a truth that I have forgotten during the day. That I am already living the life I think I must wait to begin. The sun keeps disappearing behind the horizon. It does not hurry nor does it wait. Maybe that is why I have learned to look. Because one day I know I will stand somewhere else and remember these evenings. Remember the balcony. Remember the sky that changed color. Remember the ordinary days. Remember the girl I was. I will likely wish that I had learned to notice those things when I had the chance.

A voice from the future

I am Emida oo Phawa from India. I live in the state of Meghalaya which is part of northeast India. I am a student and right now I'm doing my first year BA in English literature and as well as philosophy. I enjoy writing poetry and I sometimes feel that poetry is like a girlfriend to me who can record all my feelings and emotions, my imagination and everything I wish to express to the world.

Emida oo Phawa

I fell into the realm of myths,
And heard a thousand voices,
Echoing within my ears.
When I stood to follow where they came!
Their tune led my spirit deep.

I heard their echoes in my ears
As one intoxicated by a narcotic!
I fell into a wonder-world:
"Come with us to the land of hope;
Where peace will never tire
Of singing the strains of life,
And where the buds of love bloom
Beside the crystal streams
Where waterfalls flow



In a thousand verses.

Come, we'll lead you there;
where you shall dwell for good.

Come with us—

With the thousand voices."

The voice I had never heard,
whispered in my ears
And vanished away.

Then trembling was my heart
At the vision of that rare land.

I raise my eyes
But I saw no one.
Yet, me! in my long, deep sleep,
Awaken from a long night's dream—
Which seemed so real
And sounded so true:
The whisper from the heavenly spring;
The world of future voices—
Which I may never hear
But in a dream.

The tune of those beautiful verses

I peacefully listened,
And love was those dreams
For a thousand years ;
I will never hear
Never!
Those voices again.

CORRECTION

The language of quiet

R. Gayathri

Genre: Contemporary Free-Verse Poetry

There are letters still living inside my hands.

None of them have ever touched paper.

I carried them the way rain carries the reflection of a sky it can never keep.

You never heard, "I love you."

Instead, I carried the memory of the first day I saw you. Twenty strangers filled the room, yet

somehow, my eyes found yours before they learned anyone else's. I never knew a single glance

could become a place my heart would keep returning to.

My hands became fluent in a language my mouth was never brave enough to pronounce.

People believe love begins the moment two hearts find each other.

Mine began like a lighthouse-built for a ship that never looked toward the shore.

You were never the person I had imagined would change the geography of my heart.

Yet rivers never ask mountains for permission before changing their course.

Neither did I.

The world measured you with rulers.

I watched the cracks instead.

Flowers, after all, have always known where broken things learn to bloom.

One by one, people became closed doors.

I remained like the last window still lit in an empty street.

Not because I believed light could stop the night, but because darkness had
already memorized

your name.

I never placed my heart inside your hands.

I left it everywhere you walked-between ordinary conversations, inside
forgotten moments,

beneath every silence that lingered a little longer than it should have.

I thought one day you might notice the trail.

Instead, the wind learned my story before you did.

Perhaps silence was never empty.

Perhaps it was simply a language spoken only by those who had survived
loving without being

heard.

You looked at every sunrise I left for you and called it another morning.

You stood inside my cathedral and admired the stained glass, never realizing
every window had

been telling your story.

Now there is a library beneath my ribs.

Its shelves bend under the weight of unwritten letters.

Every page begins with your name.

Every ending forgets how to leave.

Sometimes, at night, my heartbeat wanders those aisles, running its fingers
across the spines of

books no one will ever open.

And somewhere, between dust and daylight, my love still waits

not to be returned,

only to be read

CORRECTION

I MISS YOU, STILL

R. Gayathri

Gener: Contemporary poetry

I have ego.

I have self-respect.

I know that I have both.

But when it comes to you,
I do not think twice
before abandoning everything for you.

Because it's you.

And if it's you,
I can forget my pride,
my anger,
everything.

But what am I supposed to do now?

You left me so easily,
and I am still trying to understand
how you could have done it.

Because I can't leave you
the same way you left me.

I still love you.

Every day,
every minute,
every second.

Even now,
even after you left me,
I still find myself loving you
through the things you told me,
through our conversations,



through every little memory
I still remember.

I have never really known
how to explain how much I love you.

I couldn't explain it to you.
I couldn't explain it to anyone.

Sometimes,
I can't even explain it to myself.

How do I tell someone
why I cry because of you?

How do I make them understand
that I'm not just missing you—

I'm missing everything
that came with you.

The person I was with you,
the little things,
our conversations,
the memories I thought
I would never forget.

Maybe no one would understand.

Maybe I don't even understand.

I only understood
how much I loved you
after you left me.

And that is probably
the saddest part.

You told me
you would never want to hurt me again,

but did you ever stop to think
about how much you were hurting me
when you left?

Every day,
I used to write love poems for you.

About you,
about us,
about the cute little things
we used to do together.

I used to write them
because I had you.

Now I'm writing them
because I lost you.

And I hate that.

I hate that the same person
who used to give me so many reasons
to write poems
is the same person
who gave me reasons
to not write any more.

Sometimes,
I just sit down with all these memories,
and one question keeps bothering me.

How were you able to let me go so easily
when I can't even teach myself
how to let you go?

Why?

Why was it so easy for you?

Did you really love me?

Because I keep asking myself that question
even though I know
I may never get an answer.

And maybe that's the saddest part.

Not knowing.

Not knowing if you loved me
as much as I loved you.

Not knowing if I was as important to you
as you were to me.

Even this poem
can't explain how much I love you.

I've written so much about you,
and yet it's not enough.

I can live without you.

I know I can.

But I can't live
as if you were never a part of me.

You will always be
a part of my book,

and maybe one day
I'll stop hurting
when I reread that part.

But for now,

I still find myself
going back to those pages,
still loving those memories,
still loving you
because they're the only place
I still have you.

And maybe that's the reason
I can't close the book.

Because I never learned
how to leave you.

I only learned
how to live without you.

And there's a big difference
between the two.

You learned how to leave.

I learned how to stay—

loving you,

even after you were gone.

Rebecca

Nirjhara Shafi Tathoi is a Bengali 12th grader, who firmly believes that the secrets of the universe and cosmos lies between the lines of literature and brush strokes of art. She believes it to be her life's mission to spread this eternal love for English literature and encourage more people to subscribe to this idea.

Nirjhara Shafi Tathoi

On a Saturday afternoon,

I walked by what was once alive but on which now lay a heap of grey

Etched on it a name Rebecca 1916-1944

over her stood an old willow tree,

under which her mind was joy,

But, her body suffocated

Bound and stayed there forever

while to humans she is lost in time

or time was lost by her

She , who had once roamed

Over the raw earth

Now laid alone and fleshless

in the middle of no land

Death is an art like anything else,

So pure and fragile.



She had triumphed it
Over anyone else.

Bluebell vines
As purple as the bruises of her beaten body
And vines as thick as the rope around her neck
Adorned her casket of dead cells
Like dirt covered in lovely wrapping paper

She can not see,
She can not express
She can not walk
But she can wait
She has to wait.
But for what?

To rise with two dark hollows
Where once laid the eyes of ocean
To meet her murderer
Who crushed her
in the name of his nation
and would suffer the horror he had caused
under her bloody veil.

The murderer

Oh, the murderer!

He ,who had torn away her from prayer,

Now galloped across the pure earth

He's famous

He's part of history

He's got a secret

Yet, he's a coward

The name Rebecca lives on

Within the murderers family

A name which would be hanged

By another coward.

And suffer the same fate

For her, now he cries

He grieves

He mourns

But, what can he do?

What can anyone do

For the crimes they have brought upon themselves?

Roses

Nirjhara Shafi Tathoi is a Bengali 12th grader, who enjoys reading novels and political manifestos in her free time. Maggie Shipstead's 'Great Circle' is one of her favourites.

Nirjhara Shafi Tathoi

Born from the mucky womb of mother earth

Coaxed gently by her green hands

Hands where have done wonders.

This tempting drop of perfection

Could woo the greatest fall into their bloodshed.

A living man

No matter how serious he is to care

Would have his ever so curious mind intrigued

Turned to catch a glimpse of that naive white petals

Where a man's blood divulged upon it.

So slowly had the blood dripped

Like the trail of slime left by foolish snails on hunting nights.

Innocent dew drops on the red petals

Like a mask to hide its crimes.

The man,

His body, pulled like a metal towards magnets

Each step of his five little plum toes on the road
The queen among thorns pull miles away
Like a tease

But a set of alcoholic wheels would crush his naive flesh
Like an ant
Fresh oozing blood would splatter across the dark coals
Like the sour juice of lemons
Mixed with the rains of tears of his strangers
Like a chemical mixture
Only it wouldn't react,
It would kill slowly but surely
No fingers on earth could fix it
Even those of the ever so wise green hands.
For the rose had taken him to her plump sweet lips
And chewed him up, with gruesome yellow blades
But, still we pray
Oh, if only
We could touch its beautiful petals ,Almighty
We would turn into gold like king Midas

Beyond Border

K Ravi

Border has many meanings

Each one differently projecting

Yardstick relating to its edges

Obviously referring to its hedges

Navigating from end to end to limit the binding

Dividing areas with secured fencing

Borders look up at things far and beyond

Over their edges or across their skirting

Rivalry or harmony flipping from time
to time

Dwindling or rising between edges
from time to time

Each borderline having its own
perimeter needing

Reinforcement of forces at the
border from enemies beyond the line



Criminal.....

Shraddha Bhushan Taware

Snow is falling, rain is raining, moon is charming and star is twinkling,
wind is freezing brushing off the hairs of my cheeks, i still remember the
silly laugh with my dear that winter that night watching city lights shining
bright, the intense connection between two lovers was so thick that it could
be cut by knife the night is slowly falling by them the wind is slowly
tempting love, the neon light is only shining on both lovers highlighting
them in crowd ,.....

You can call me criminal because this is nothing but just my imagination.....



Lonely heart

Shraddha Bhushan Taware

what you said took root in my heart I can feel another person, I wait for smile to be replaced by tears, love is true on the verge of collapse, so what if you know the answer to so many questions, it turns out that tolerance doesn't require gift as long as you love a wrong person, Pain is more real than happiness, why is love so sarcastic? I forgot how many times it has happened, I can't be myself when seeing you, loneliness is more real than hugging love drives people out of their mind, Am i being too selfish? I refuse days of being lonelier, I can't let it go I can't see my future either, is it imperfection what love is really like?.....



The Jealous Cloud

Abhishek Rauniyar

Staring at the moon,
Lost in its gentle light.
Here came the clouds,
Hiding it from sight.

The wind began to blow,
The clouds grew full and low.
Too heavy to hold,
They burst into the rain.

Yet the moon stayed true,
Shining through the night.
Back came the jealous clouds,
Hiding it from sight.



A letter to Jasmine

SWEETY METILDA C

Oh dear jasmine,
tiny little white one,
the feelings you awaken in us are simply magical.

To some, you may be just a flower,
but to many, you are happiness itself.

When you bloom,
we lovingly string you and adorn our hair..
a beauty beyond compare.

The fragrance you carry,
the smiles you bring,
speaks a language that voices can hardly sing

From being gifted to our loved ones
to making festivals and occasions more special,
your value is beyond measure.

From the moment you are a delicate bud
until you blossom with full grace,
you remain a piece of art,
cherished and carried with love.

To be Known as a Human Being.

Shaurya Awasthi (I) is an Indian writer, poet, and passionate observer of contemporary socio-political issues. Driven by a strong sense of humanity and personal conviction, he uses poetry as a medium to reflect on social shortcomings and people's pain.

Shaurya Awasthi

As on the planet earth are we ,
In a youth spirit, soul so free.
Father God has sent us for a cause,
Making the men humanly creature, his aim was.

A boy I saw in winter days and nights,
There's fog, too cool, but he just fights.
As he is working for a livelihood,
With numb eyes, red and frozen hands, he stood.
Shivering with cold in one shirt,
But that to my heart, it doesn't hurt.

Then a man I saw at the end of street,
With a fractured hand that needed a treat.
Working stiff, paving bricks to build a cottage wall,
As he had to get food and clothes, for his kids and all.
His fingers being swollen and dipressed he felt,



Watching him my heart does not melt.

A little girl I saw in the town nearby,

Out her mouth came a protesting cry.

As she willed to get educated,

For her father didn't allow, such was she ill-fated.

She was set involved in household chores,

Yet out my eyes a single tear not pours.

Then I must be an animal or a creature other one,

For they live only for themselves with worries for none.

Feel the pain, and grief of others, is a humanly thing.

Do good deeds for other to be known as a human being.

Helping and caring each other is humanly thing.

Don't be selfish and love everyone to be known as a human being.

Where No Borders Can Reach

Aparajita Das is a young poet and writer who finds inspiration in emotions and the quite story hidden within everyday life. Her writing reflects her believe in the power of words to connect hearts, cross boundaries and express what often remains unspoken.

Aparajita Das

Love does not arrive
with a language of its own;
it enters quietly—
where words fall silent,
and two hearts
somehow understand.

It does not pause
at religion, caste, distance,
or borders drawn across a map.

Love simply happens—
like rain finding the earth,
like sunlight finding
a forgotten window.

Perhaps love is this:

To care for someone's smile
even when you are not
the reason behind it.

To remember their dreams
as stars they were born to reach.

To stand beside a woman
not as her owner,
but as the person
who never asks her
to become smaller
so that he may feel taller.



For love does not conquer.

It does not say,
“You are mine.”

It says—

“You are free.”
“Become everything
you have ever dreamed of becoming.”

And when she rises,
love does not burn
at the brightness of her wings.

It looks up, It smiles.

It says, “Fly.”

Because borders belong
to maps, Love belongs
to hearts.

And hearts have never
learned how to stay
within lines.

For where love is true,
there are no borders.

Only horizons.

Love That Feels Like Home

Yashika

~Maybe love is when someone slowly becomes a part of your everyday life. You start getting attached to them, waiting for their messages, remembering the little things they say, and thinking about them for no reason at all. Love isn't about finding a perfect partner. It's about finding someone who makes love feel perfect through the way you feel for each other. There are arguments, misunderstandings, and days when you don't understand each other. But even then, you don't want to leave — you just want things to get better.

Because love isn't only about being there on the good days. It's also about staying when things aren't easy.

Sometimes love is just a simple, “Did you eat?” or “Are you okay?”

Sometimes it's just, “I'm always here for you.”

And sometimes, it's just being together without saying much.

And maybe the most beautiful kind of love is when someone stops feeling like just a person in your life...

and starts feeling like home.!!!!♡



Seasons of life

I am a poet who turns emotions, observations, and the quiet moments of life into words. My writing explores the depth of human emotions, dreams, resilience, and the beauty hidden within ordinary moments. Through poetry, I aim to create words that readers can feel, remember, and find a piece of themselves in.

Heena

The sunrise in life brings a music no one can find
Of happiness, joy, hotness but still keep it in ur mind
Happiness lasts for a little while
But shine again in some matter of time

The rays of sun tell a story
Filled with enormous glory
Little happiness little sadness
Makes person's life filled with fairness



The rain in life brings a music no one can find
Of sorrow, pain, crying but still everything is fine
Never last for a long time
but no matter ,comes again cause it's too kind
The music can't be written
On a leave that can be thrown
With the ink of the water body

can be wiped boldly

The cold breeze of life brings a music no one can find

Of coldness,silence,Toughness but still gives you the sign

That it won't last a long

But still comes again just like a song

A big pile of snow falls upon you

Hide it leaving no clue

It will show the way

Melting it self one day

The time seems like a bullet train on a fly

In the universe which if stopped can dry

Seasons comes with glory and light

But don't let it drown you in the deep Starry night

That could be me

Eden writes about the invisible ones. The girls who don't get chosen. The ones who learn to be small, to be quiet, to be easy. She tells their stories because someone needs to hear them. Her work explores survival — the ache of being forgotten and the stubborn light that refuses to go out.

Eden Getahun Asaminew

She is six years old, standing in the kitchen doorway, watching her mother pack groceries into blue plastic bags. Her mother's knuckles are white. The veins rise like rivers under thin skin. She wants to help. She reaches for a bag.

Her mother says: "You'll drop it."

She drops it anyway. Apples roll across the linoleum. Red and round and perfect, now bruised. Her mother doesn't yell. She just sighs — that long, hollow sound that fills the whole house and settles in the girl's chest like a stone. She bends down to pick them up. The girl stands there watching. She learns, right then, that her hands are not for holding things.

Her name is Wren. She is small and delicate, with chestnut hair that falls in tangled waves past her shoulders and hazel eyes that always look like they're about to cry. She has a dusting of freckles across her nose and a tiny crescent-shaped birthmark above her left eyebrow. She wears an oversized olive green coat with patched elbows, handed down from someone who left. Around her neck hangs a silver chain with a small wren charm — the only thing she owns that feels like hers.

She is beautiful, in the way that fragile things are beautiful. But no one sees her.

She is seven, sitting at the dinner table. Her father talks about work. Her mother nods without listening. The girl opens her mouth to say something — a story about a bird she saw, a question about the moon — but her mother shakes her head once. Not now. She closes her mouth. The story stays inside. It turns into a stone. She has a lot of stones now.

She is eight. Her parents fight every night. The walls are thin. She presses her pillow over her ears, but she still hears them. "You never listen." "You never stop talking." Their voices are sharp and broken. She learns that love sounds like breaking things.

She is nine. Her father leaves. He takes a suitcase and doesn't look back. Her mother stands in the doorway and doesn't cry. The girl wants to ask, "Does he still love me?" But she already knows the answer. She learns that people leave and they don't always take you with them.

She is ten. Her mother looks at her across the kitchen table. She says, "I can't do this anymore." But she isn't talking about the dishes or the bills or the broken chair. She is talking about the girl. Wren learns that she is something to be finished. Something to be put down.

She is eleven. She is at the orphanage. The beds are hard. The other girls stare. The matron has cold hands and colder eyes. She says, "You'll learn to be grateful." Wren nods. She always nods. She learns that grateful means quiet. Grateful means small. Grateful means not wanting anything.



She is twelve. She shares a room with three other girls. One of them cries at night. Wren lies awake and listens. She thinks about her parents — how they fought over nothing, how they divorced over everything, how neither of them looked back. She learns that love is a house with no doors.

She is thirteen. A couple comes to the orphanage. They look at her. They look at another girl. They choose the other girl. Wren smiles and says, "I'm happy for her." Because that's what good girls say. She learns that being good means being left behind.

She is fourteen. No one comes. No one ever comes. She stops waiting. Waiting is another word for hurting.

She is fifteen. She starts to fade. She becomes the quiet one. The one who doesn't ask. The one who doesn't reach. The one who doesn't hope. Hope is dangerous. Hope is a thing that bleeds.

She is seventeen. A teacher tells her she is "too much." She shrinks. She's been shrinking her whole life. Space is not for her.

She is twenty-three. A boy holds her hand in a movie theater. His thumb rubs her knuckles. She doesn't like it. But he's nice. She doesn't want to be difficult. She stays until the credits roll. She learns that her body is not her own.

She is twenty-nine. She stands in front of a mirror in a dress that doesn't fit. Her mother's voice, from somewhere far away, says "You look lovely." She buys it anyway. She learns that her reflection is for others.

She is thirty-four. It is 11:47 PM. She stands in the dark kitchen. The phone is face-down on the counter. The second glass of water is still full. She pours it down the sink. She thinks about everything — the apples, the stones, the sighs, the fights, the suitcase, the empty doorway, the hard beds, the crying girl, the couple who chose someone else, the waiting, the fading, the hands that held her, the mirrors that lied, the parents who left, all of it.

She thinks: That could be me. That was me. That is me.

She is thirty-four and one week. She buys a small plant from the grocery store. She brings it home. She puts it on the counter where the second glass used to sit. She waters it. She watches it. She waits. She doesn't know if she can keep it alive. But she is going to try. Because she is six and seven and

eight and nine and ten and eleven and twelve and thirteen and fourteen and fifteen and seventeen and twenty-three and twenty-nine and thirty-four. She is still standing in that kitchen. Her hands are empty. She is finally ready to hold something. Even if it's just a small green thing that doesn't ask her to be anything other than the person who waters it.

She is thirty-four and two weeks. The plant is still alive. She thinks that means something. She thinks that means she might be too.

CORRECTION

"A year away from Home "

Manvi gupta

I didn't even realize how quickly time flies.

A year ago, we all left home to chase our dreams—

Some setting out with smiles, others with a sense of disappointment.

We all made a fresh start in an unknown city.

Then, gradually, we met new people; conversations turned into friendships,
and life moved forward.

I still miss home so much—

Mom's home-cooked meals, her scolding, her affection—everything;

Every single moment spent with my siblings;

And Dad's love—that can't be expressed.

I miss it all deeply even now,

Today, recalling those memories brings tears
to my eyes.

That is how fast the time changes.



The Person I might have been

Arwa Danish is an English poet and writer who explores longing, identity, memory, and the complexities of human emotions. A published poet featured in multiple anthologies, her work is known for its introspective voice and unconventional themes. She writes to find poetry in the things left unsaid.

Arwa Danish

I wonder who I would be if
I had never left Riyadh,
if childhood had remained
between those familiar streets,
if home had never become
a word with two meanings.
I wonder who I would be if
I had never changed schools,
never learnt that friendships
can have expiry dates,
that some people leave quietly
and some leave you
questioning whether you were ever
worth staying for.
I wonder who I would be if
I had never discovered poetry.
Would I have found another way



to say the things
I could never say aloud?
Would I still have learnt
to hide grief inside metaphors,
to make a wound rhyme
just so I could bear looking at it?
I wonder who I would be if
certain things had never happened to me.
Maybe I would be less suspicious
of kindness.
Maybe I wouldn't read between
every pause and every silence.
Maybe I wouldn't know
how quickly a person
can become a memory.
I wonder who I would be if
I hadn't spent so much time
trying to understand people—
why they hurt,
why they leave,
why they return,
why apologies sometimes arrive
after the damage has already
learnt your name.

Perhaps I wouldn't question everything.

Perhaps I wouldn't want to study law

just to understand

why some people get protection

while others are taught

to protect themselves.

Perhaps I wouldn't write

about uncomfortable things

just because silence

makes them easier to ignore.

And yes,

I know I grew stronger.

I know I became someone

who can carry things

I once thought would break her.

But I never wanted

to learn strength this way.

I wanted love,

not life lessons.

I wanted memories,

not scars.

I wanted people to stay,

not stories to write about

after they left.

I wanted to grow up slowly—
with scraped knees,
silly friendships,
late-night laughter
and photographs
I could look back at
without remembering everything
that came after.
I suppose that's the cruelest part.
I did become stronger.
I just wish
I had never needed to.

Isn't It Bliss to Be Journaling?

Prutha Rajpati

Isn't it bliss to set thy thoughts to paper,
Whilst midnight's hush doth linger by thy side?
To let the quill become thy heart's own keeper,
And bid thy hidden sorrows gently bide?

Isn't it bliss to write what lips cannot utter,
And give a name to feelings left unknown?
When every trembling thought that once did flutter
May find, upon the page, a place its own?

The parchment asketh not why tears are falling,
Nor doth it judge the wounds that thou dost bear;
It simply hearkeneth, when silence calleth,
And keepeth every secret placed therein with care.

Within its lines, the past may come as softly
As distant bells beneath a winter moon;
And memories, though bitter, may grow kindly,
When time hath taught the wounded
heart its tune.

O blessed journal, faithful friend of
sorrow,
Thou knowest all the dreams I dare
not speak;
Thou keepest yesterday, and yet
tomorrow
Hath found the courage in thy pages
meek.

So let me write when stars are dimly
gleaming,
When sleep forsaketh me and night
grows still;
For journaling is more than merely



dreaming—

'Tis how the soul may speak when words fall ill.

And when the years have carried me far hence,

And youth hath faded like a morning mist,

I shall return unto these pages—

And whisper: *was not this, indeed, a bliss?*

CORRECTION

WISHES

Shivam is a Class 12 student and young poet from India. His writing explores emotions, experiences, and the thoughts that often go unspoken. Through poetry, he aims to turn feelings into words that readers can connect with.

Shivam Mishra

I wish my wishes comes true
I wish I had a crew
I wish to go on a voyage with them
I wish to live and enjoy with them
I wish we make wishes while seeing the falling stars
I wish while protecting them I get some scars
I wish all my close people are on my ship
I wish we play and sometime we slip
I wish they have fun with me
I wish in every situation they stand with me
I wish sometime we face difficulties
I wish still we have a great journey
I wish my wishes comes true
I wish I had a crew.



The Age of Almost

Souhardya Chakraborty is a young writer and musician from India with a deep interest in poetry, storytelling, and the emotions hidden within everyday life. His writing often explores youth, identity, relationships, ambition, and the quiet struggles of growing up in a rapidly changing world.

Souhardya Chakraborty

"Bro, are you alive?"

Rohan stared at the message on his screen

Aditya - 2:13 AM

He typed in

barely

and hit delete

then he typed in

"yeah lol"

and sent it.

Three dots appeared on the screen immediately.

Aditya:

"Tomorrow's test?"

Rohan looked at his open textbook next to his phone

He had been staring at the same page for twenty minutes

Rohan:

"Wait, we have a test?"



Aditya:

"👁️"

That pretty much sums up their lives.

It was 2:16 AM, and instead of sleeping, two teenage boys were discussing an exam neither of them were prepared for

Rohan finally tossed his phone onto his pillow

"I'm actually cooked"

His sister yelled from the next room

"Go to sleep!"

"I'm trying!"

"You've been saying that for an hour!"

"Okay!"

There was a pause.

Then

"Goodnight."

"Goodnight."

Rohan smiled

Everything was normal for once

until his phone buzzed again

This time, it was the class group

IMPORTANT: Sir may take a surprise test tomorrow

Rohan stared at the message.

"Of course."

The next day, Rohan walked into school looking like he had personally lost a fight with his alarm clock

Aditya looked at him

"Bro."

"What?"

"You look finished."

"Thanks."

"I mean it respectfully."

"That's worse."

They laughed

Their teacher came in

"Phones away."

All phones were put away immediately

for about forty seconds

until someone whispered

"Guys, look at this."

A phone was passed under the table

Three people tried not to laugh

The teacher stopped talking

"Would anyone like to share what's so funny?"

Silence

Rohan stared at his notebook like it had the answers to the universe

"Thought so."

At lunch, things were not as funny

Rohan was sitting with Aditya and Kabir when Meera walked over

"Are you guys coming Saturday?" "To what?" Kabir asked

"The project meeting."

Aditya frowned

"We already decided we're doing it online."

"No, you decided that,"

"Because nobody wanted to come."

"I wanted to."

"Then why didn't you say anything?"

"I did."

"No, you didn't."

"I literally sent it in the group."

"You sent 'maybe'"

"That means I wanted to!"

Everyone started talking at once

Rohan stayed silent

The argument wasn't really about Saturday anymore

It was about everything that had been building up for weeks

Who had done more work

Who hadn't replied

Who was always late

Who made decisions without asking
Who had started hanging out with whom
Who had stopped talking to whom
And underneath it all, the unspoken truth:

They were changing

Growing apart

Nobody had done anything wrong

There wasn't really a bad guy

They were just growing in different directions

And somehow, that was worse

After school, Rohan checked his phone

There were twelve messages in the group

Most of them were arguments

One person had left the group

Another had sent

"Whatever. Do what you want."

Rohan stared at the screen

He wanted to fix everything

But he had no idea how

So he did what all teenagers do when they don't know what to say

He sent a meme

Nobody replied

"Yeah," he whispered

"That's bad."

At home, his father was waiting

"How was school?"

"Fine."

"Your teacher sent a message."

Rohan stopped

"What message?"

"About your marks."

"Oh."

"You got 61."

"I know."

"Your cousin got 89."

There it was

The inevitable

"Dad, can we not do this?"

"Do what?"

"Compare me with everyone."

"I'm trying to motivate you."

"It doesn't motivate me."

His father looked frustrated

"Then what motivates you?"

Rohan had no idea

That was the problem

He wanted to do well

He just didn't know what "doing well" meant anymore

His father continued

"At your age, I didn't have all these distractions."

Rohan looked at the phone in his hand

"Yup."

His father frowned

"What?"

"Nothing."

"Say it."

Rohan sighed

"You had different problems, Dad."

"So do you."

"I know."

"Then take them seriously."

"I am!"

His voice came out louder than he intended

The room got quiet

Rohan regretted it immediately

His father looked at him

"Then show me."

Rohan went upstairs

He closed his bedroom door

not hard

just closed

There was a difference

He sat on his bed

His phone was full of notifications

He ignored them

for once

Five minutes later, he heard his father talking to his mother downstairs

"I don't know how to help him."

Rohan froze

His father sounded sad

not angry

"I don't want him to struggle like I did," he heard him say

Rohan looked down

Maybe his father didn't want to control him

Maybe he was just scared

Scared that his son would make the same mistakes

Scared that one wrong choice would ruin his life

Parents had their own demons

They just didn't know how to explain them

And teenagers had theirs

They just didn't know how to explain them either

Somehow, two people could love each other deeply and still not understand each other

Later that night, Aditya called

"You okay?"

"Yup."

"Liar."

Rohan laughed

"I'm fine."

"That's also a lie."

Rohan was quiet

Then he said

"My dad and I fought"

"Again?"

"Yup"

"Same"

"About marks?"

"Career."

"Same."

They both laughed

Then Aditya said something surprising

"Do you think our parents actually understand what it's like now?"

Rohan thought about it

"Probably not."

"But do we understand what it's like for them?"

Rohan looked at the floor

"Probably not."

Silence

"That's annoying."

"Very."

The next day at school, the friend group was awkward

Nobody knew what to say

Finally, Rohan walked over to Meera

"About yesterday..."

She looked at him

"I was being annoying."

"So was I."

"Okay."

"Okay."

They stood there awkwardly

Then Meera laughed

"That's it?"

"What else am I supposed to say?"

"I don't know."

"Same."

They both smiled

It wasn't much

But sometimes all it took was two people admitting they were wrong

That evening, Rohan sat at his desk and opened his notebook

His English teacher had assigned them to write about their generation

He had initially wanted to write about phones

Then social media

Then slang

But now he knew there was more to it

He wrote

We are Gen Z

People think we're addicted to our phones

Maybe we are

People think we're too sensitive

Maybe sometimes we are

People think we're lazy

That's not always true

We're tired

We're pressured

We're confused

And we're constantly comparing ourselves to people who don't even know we exist

We compete with our friends

Sometimes we secretly feel jealous of them

Then we feel guilty for being jealous

We want our parents to understand us

But sometimes we don't understand them either

They want us to succeed because they're scared we'll struggle

We want freedom because we're scared we'll wake up one day and realise we lived someone else's dream

Our friends tell us to chill

Our parents tell us to be serious

The internet tells us to become successful before twenty five

And somewhere between all three, we're just trying to figure out who we are

Maybe that's why we seem confused

Because we are

But isn't everyone at our age?

Rohan stopped writing

He looked at his phone

There were new messages

A group notification

A message from Aditya

A missed call from his father

He smiled

He didn't know what the future had in store

He didn't know which of his friends would still be around five years later

He didn't know what career path he wanted to take

He didn't know whether his parents would fully understand him

Maybe they wouldn't

Maybe he wouldn't fully understand them either

But perhaps growing up wasn't about suddenly having all the answers

Maybe it was about learning how to have difficult conversations

Learning when to say sorry

Learning that your friends aren't your competition

Learning that your parents' pressure sometimes comes from fear

Learning that your own dreams are allowed to change

And learning that being lost doesn't mean you're failing

Rohan picked up his phone

His father had sent a message

"Can we talk?"

Rohan stared at it for a moment

Then replied

"Yup."

He got up and walked downstairs

No dramatic music

No perfect ending

Just a father and son sitting at the dining table, trying to understand each other

And maybe that was the most Gen Z thing of all

Not having everything figured out

Just being willing to talk about it

Even if the conversation started awkwardly

Even if someone got angry

Even if someone said the wrong thing

Because somewhere between the exams, the group chats, the comparisons, the fights, the expectations, the reels, and the endless pressure to become something

they were still just kids

Trying to become people

And nobody had given them the manual.

The Life You Gave Me

Souhardya Chakraborty is a young writer and musician from India with a deep interest in poetry, storytelling, and the emotions hidden within everyday life. His writing often explores youth, identity, relationships, ambition, and the quiet struggles of growing up in a rapidly changing world.

Souhardya Chakraborty

You built me a house from the bricks of your pain,
while I was too young to know what it cost you to reign.
You carried the winter so I could inherit the spring,
and never once asked what your own tired shoulders could bring.

You gave me a map, every road neatly drawn,
said, "Walk where it's safe; don't get lost before dawn."
But, Dad, there's a road that keeps calling my name—
not paved with your footsteps, not lit by your flame.

You call it a future; I call it a sky,
and sometimes your warnings feel heavier than why.
You built me an anchor to weather the sea,
but I'm asking you now—let the ship learn to be free.

I know every "study" has love underneath,
every "be practical" hides a fear you don't speak.
Every comparison, every number you bring
is your heart wearing armour, afraid of one thing.

You're scared I might stumble,
I'm scared I might stay,
on a road that looks perfect
but isn't my way.

They say, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree,"
but, Dad, let this apple grow wild, let it be.
I carry your roots underneath my skin,
but roots aren't meant to keep the branches within.

You taught me to stand when the whole world said fall,
to knock on closed doors, to answer the call.
You taught me the meaning of "bite the bullet,"

to keep moving forward when courage felt futile.

But now that I'm standing, don't hold back my feet,
don't turn every dream into something to beat.
You taught me to swim when I couldn't see shore—
please don't be afraid when I swim a little more.

I know I have stumbled.

I know I've been late.

I've said "five minutes"
and stayed up till eight.

I've hidden behind screens when the world felt
too loud,
laughed with my friends just to blend with the
crowd.
We live with the world in the palm of our hand,
yet sometimes can't tell those we love where we
stand.

We're called lazy.

We're called unaware.

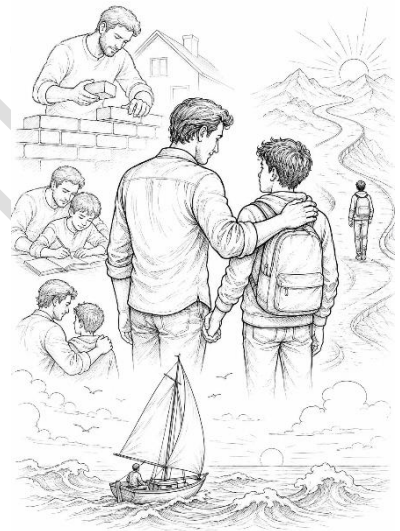
We're told we're too sensitive,
too lost to care.

But we're growing up while the ground keeps
shifting,
trying to find meaning while the world keeps
drifting.

We are a generation caught between yesterday's rules
and tomorrow's machines,
between parents' expectations
and our unfinished dreams.

And somewhere between your "You need to do more"
and my "I'm trying,"
we became two people
who were both quietly crying.

You wanted to build me a bridge over every unknown sea,
but, Dad, you can't cross every ocean for me.



One day I'll fall.

One day I'll fail.

One day I'll chase a dream
and watch it set sail.

And when that happens,
please don't say, "I told you so."

Just sit beside me.

Let the silence grow.

Because you taught me that losing isn't the end,
that broken things sometimes learn how to mend.

You gave me your strength.

You gave me your scars.

You taught me to reach
for impossible stars.

But I don't want to inherit
every road that you knew.

I want to take what you taught me
and make something new.

So don't mistake freedom
for walking away.

I'm not leaving your lessons.

I'm carrying them every day.

You taught me to stand.

Now let me decide where.

You taught me to dream.

Now let me dare.

You gave me a compass,
but I must choose the sea.

You gave me a life, Dad—

now let me make it mine,

with your courage in my blood
and my own name on the line.

Because someday, when the years have flown by,
and the boy you once held is no longer that child,
I hope you won't ask if I followed your track.

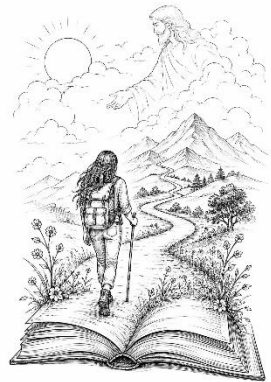
I hope you'll just smile
and say,

“I knew you'd find your way back.”

A page of me

Emida oo Phawa

Years travelling along the road
That seems to be infinity;
My footsteps carry journeys' notes
Of hope and tragedy.
They led me on a little walk
From dawn until the fading sun,
They hold my feet on hills and vales
And dearly love my fun.
The years will pass, the end will come
To lay my spirit down to rest.
God let me face the breeze and storm,
Then calls me as his welcome guest.
Thus bind this walk into a book
And pen it for eternity.
The passing world won't pause to look,
Or flip a page of me.
Yet there, where dwells my living soul,
Shall it by Him be read for me.
Behold the scales of justice weigh
What once was meant to be.
For all this life now ends and lies
On pages where my spirit flies.



Abhi Toh Khud Se Mulaqat Baaki Hai

Awani Agrawal is a young writer who finds meaning in emotions, ordinary moments, and the unspoken stories people carry within themselves. Through her writing, she explores healing, self-discovery, relationships, and the quiet beauty of being human, hoping her words make someone feel a little less alone.

Awani Agrawal

Kabhi marks ka bojh, kabhi kal ki fikr,
kabhi khud se hi hoti hai ek ajeeb si zikr.
Sab poochte hain— “Aage kya karna hai?”
Par dil poochta hai— “Pehle khud ko toh samajhna hai.”

Kisi ki success dekh kar khud ko tolte hain,
Muskurate hue bhi andar se kuch bolte hain.
“Sab theek hai”— kehna ab aadat si ban gayi,
Par khud se baat karne ki fursat kahin kho gayi.

Kabhi parents ki expectations ka pressure,
Kabhi friends ke beech khud ko prove karne ka pressure.
Kabhi future ke sapne aankhon mein sajaate hain,
Kabhi unhi sapnon se khud hi ghabraate hain.

Pyaar chahiye, par heartbreak se darte hain,
Azadi chahiye, par decisions se darte hain.

Bade hone ki jaldi bhi, bachpan ki yaad bhi,
Zindagi chahiye apni—par har mod par sawaal bhi.

Shayad hum confused nahi,
bas ek naye daur mein hain.
Na poore bachche, na poore bade—
bas khud ko samajhne ke safar mein hain.

Toh agar aaj raasta thoda dhundhla hai,
toh iska matlab ye nahi ki sapna adhura hai.
Har sawaal ka jawab aaj milna zaroori nahi—
kyunki humari kahani abhi poori nahi.

Thoda rukenge, thoda girenge,
phir apne kadmon se hi sambhalenge.
Aaj chahe khud par yakeen kam hai—
kal isi dil ko apne naam karenge.

Kyuki teenage sirf confusion ka naam nahi,
yeh woh waqt hai jahan hum khud ko likhte hain—
aur shayad isi li
abhi toh khud se mulaqat baaki hai.



The Last Farewell

Lavina Shukrwal

There was a little girl named Sunita, almost seven years old. She loved animals very much and always wanted to protect them in any way she could. One day, she was coming home from tuition. On her way home, she saw a baby pigeon. It was the same baby pigeon she used to see every day on her way home. But that day, it was sitting on the street instead of being in its nest. She went closer to it. The pigeon tried to fly away, but it couldn't. She thought, You are too little to fly. I will take care of you.

She picked him up and took him home. Her mother examined the bird and said, "I think his wing is broken, and he has a wound on his leg. He probably tried to fly but fell down. But there is nothing to worry about. His wing will heal, and the injury is minor."

Sunita asked her mother, "How do you know?"

Her mother replied, "There is an uncle in our neighbourhood who used to treat wounded birds, so I know a little about them."

Her mother then told Sunita that the pigeon should be put back into his nest after his wounds healed because, without his mother, he would never be able to live freely. Her mother said, "Okay, give him some rice and water."

Sunita put some rice in one bowl and water in another. She also made a small bed for him. After carefully placing him on the bed, Sunita said, "Here is your food and water. When you become hungry, you can eat."

Soon, her mother called Sunita from the kitchen. Sunita answered, "I am coming. My mother is calling me."

Then she looked at the pigeon and said, "Oh, you don't have a name. I'll give you one. How about Cuckoo? Isn't that good?"

The baby pigeon flapped his wings a little, as if he liked the name. She went to the dining table and told her father, "Papa, I gave him a name - Cuckoo ." Her father said, "Cuckoo is a different bird's name, isn't it?"

Sunita replied, "But he liked the name". After dinner, Sunita did her homework and went to Cuckoo to say goodnight. After saying goodnight, she started playing games. Her mother took the phone away and sent her to sleep. Sunita looked at Cuckoo one last time and went to sleep.

The next morning, she went to see Cuckoo, but he was not in his place. Sunita panicked and started looking everywhere. Then she saw Cuckoo on the balcony, trying to fly. Sunita caught him and said, "You are not ready to fly yet."

Her mother said, "Your wing is still healing. Put him back and bandage his wounds."

Sunita played with him until her mother sent her to school.

Every day after returning from school, Sunita would throw her bag aside, leave her shoes wherever she found a place, and run straight to Cuckoo. She was always so excited to see him that she often forgot to put her things away. Her mother would scold her for making a mess, but Sunita would quickly arrange everything before returning to Cuckoo.

One day, after coming home from school, Sunita put her bag on the bed, took off her school shoes, and ran towards Cuckoo.

"Oh! Your bowl is empty. Wait, I'll give you some food."



Her mother suddenly came and saw the mess. She scolded Sunita, "What is this behaviour? You have messed up everything. Put your bag in its place. And look—you have thrown your shoes in the opposite direction."

Sunita became sad and arranged everything. Her mother also helped her change out of her uniform. Then her mother said, "He is healthy now. His wounds have healed. Now it is time to put him back in his nest."

Sunita angrily replied, "No! He will die there."

Her mother calmly said, "He is healthy now, Sunita. Everything will be okay."

For a few hours, Sunita played with Cuckoo. Her mother asked, "What about your tuition?"

Sunita replied, "Today is a holiday."

Then she cried, "Mama, Cuckoo is flying! Where are you going? You will hurt yourself!"

Her mother said, "Don't catch him."

After an hour, Sunita put Cuckoo back in his place, gave him some rice and water, and did her homework after her mother scolded her.

The next morning, she said bye to Cuckoo and went to school. After coming back, she played with him and then went to tuition. Before leaving for tuition, Sunita checked on Cuckoo one last time. She looked at his leg and noticed that his wound had completely healed. Cuckoo looked healthy. He kept looking at Sunita again and again, as if he wanted to see her.

Sunita smiled and said, "Bye, Cuckoo. I'll see you when I come back."

Cuckoo gently flapped his wings, as if he were saying bye to her too. Sunita smiled and left for tuition, never knowing that it would be the last time she would see him.

After coming back from tuition, Sunita put her bag on the table and immediately ran to see Cuckoo. She looked at him and smiled.

"Cuckoo, I have a gift for you!"

She went closer to him, but after a few moments, she noticed that he was not moving. She called her mother, "Mama, come here!"

Her mother entered the room. Her eyes filled with tears when she saw Cuckoo.

Sunita asked innocently, "Why isn't he moving? Is he sleeping?"

Her mother gently checked Cuckoo. Then, with tears in her eyes, she sadly said, "Beta, he is no more."

Sunita looked at her mother in confusion.

“He died? How is that possible? Why did he die? I took care of him every day.”

Her mother gently held her and said, “Some things in life are unpredictable. No matter how hard we try or how much we care, some things are not meant to stay with us forever”.

Sunita cried. Her mother continued, “Cuckoo loved you too. You gave him love when he needed it most. But sometimes, we have to accept that we cannot keep someone with us forever.”

Her mother comforted Sunita and gently wiped away her tears.

“Don't cry, beta. You gave Cuckoo your love and took care of him when he needed you. Now, it is time to give him a farewell—a last farewell before he begins his journey into the afterlife.”

Sunita and her father went to an empty piece of ground. Her father dug a small pit, and Sunita gently placed Cuckoo inside it. Then she took out the gift she had wanted to give him—a small band with his name, “Cuckoo,” written on it—and gently placed it with him.

Sunita looked at Cuckoo for the last time. With tears in her eyes, she calmly and sadly whispered,

“Goodbye, Cuckoo. Rest in peace.”

It was her last farewell to the little bird she had loved so deeply.

After a year of thinking about what her mother had said, Sunita finally realised that sometimes it is better to let those we love live freely rather than force them to stay with us. She understood that love is not about keeping someone close forever; sometimes, love means giving them the freedom to live their own life.

Whenever Sunita saw a bird flying freely across the sky, she remembered Cuckoo and smiled sadly.

“Now you are free to fly, Cuckoo.”

Cuckoo was the first and the last bird Sunita ever kept as a pet. And with that, she carried his memory in her heart.

CORRECTION

Forgotten Nightmare

Ajay yadav

Nagpur had long buried the mystery of the nine friends. For 21 years, the case remained closed, never discussed, never reopened. But when Officer Sumeet came across the old files, something about the case felt unfinished.

The file contained only one sentence written in bold letters:

"This case must never be opened again."

But why?

Why would an entire city still fear a case from 21 years ago?



The Nine Friends

Ajay yadav

Sumeet started digging into the past and found that the case involved nine college friends—

- Risha
- Adarsh
- Aditya
- Gyani
- Akash
- Namita
- Yash
- Ajay
- Manish

Back then, they were just young students, enjoying life—until one night changed everything.

That night, they went to an abandoned house on the outskirts of Nagpur.

By morning, none of them were ever seen again.

Under the Same Sky

Gauri bhatt

Yes, we were miles away under the same sky,
Yet every star still whispered, "You're nearby."

The moon showed up like your eyes,
As if it knew the reason for my cries.

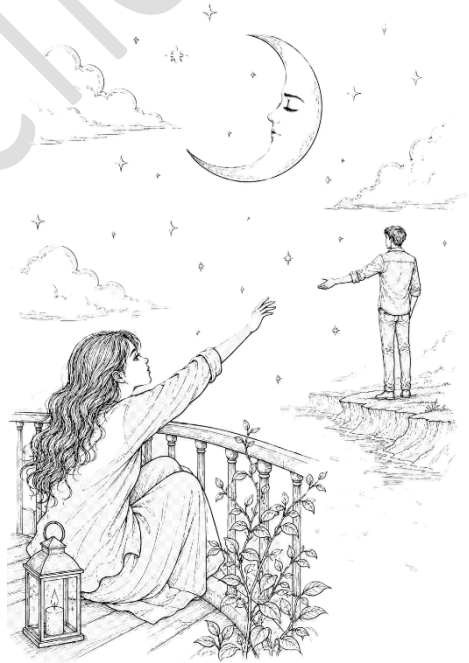
The cold breeze felt like a warm hug,
As if your love still lingered in its touch.

Everything was dreamy until you lied,
And every star forgot the way to shine.

I wonder, how could I be this wrong to you,
When loving you was all I ever knew.

How did you forget I was your life,
While I still carried you through every night.

But no grudges for you, my love,
I'll always thank the stars for what we were.



When you loved me, and I was right,
Before forever slipped away that night.

CORRECTION

I Was an Ocean

Gauri bhatt

I was an ocean, and he didn't know my depth.

He only admired the waves, as if nothing else was left.

Although I told him I was too deep.

He wanted the beauty of the ocean, not the weight it carried.

You can't explore me from the shore.

The sea reveals itself to those who dare explore.

Silly me, I thought he was deeper than I.

His eyes held oceans, but his soul ran dry.

So I stopped begging the shore to become the sea.

And I hope one day, I'll meet someone who doesn't fear the sea within me.



Ek baat kahu ?

Jaannii

Ek baat kahu ? Naraz toh nahi hogi na

Tere aangan mein meri -

baarat toh nahi hogi na

Teri woh aadatein geeta ke jaisi thi

Teri woh surat maa sita ke jaisi thi

Main nahi keh paaunga khud ko ram

Nahi ban paaunga kabhi us radha ka shyam

Per haa main ravan toh nahi hoon na

Mandodari ke hote hue ye sita ko chhona

Maine ram sa nahi per -

ram sa dukh bhi dekha hai

17 saal ki ummr mein woh naadan sa -

ladka ki puri duniya mein akela hai

Sochne ki baat hai na ek chote se -

kharoch per maa ke aanchal per -

chuup jaata woh ladka



Ab is dard se bhare zakhmo ko chupa ke sabke saamne muskura ke keh deta
nahi maa sub thik aur acha

Sochta hoon keh doon tumse nahi reh paaunga tumhare bina

Kyunki sub kuch sikhaya hai tumne ye nahi sikhaya kese jeena hai tumhare
bina

Har pal tere hi baare sochna

Tute hue dil ko dobara kharochna

Naadan se dil ko pathhar bana liya hai maine

Apni inn aankhon mein tera -

aakar chupa liya hai maine

Jub akela sa mehsoos ho toh woh saare yaadon ko dohra liya karta hoon

Jaante hue bhi tere na aane per apna

ishq teri tasveeron per jata liya karta hoon

Ek baat kahu naaraz toh nahi hogi na

Tere aangan mein meri -

barat toh nahi hogi na

Maybe We Are All Tired

Awani Agrawal writes about the feelings we often keep to ourselves—the ones hidden behind ordinary days, quiet smiles, and unfinished conversations.

Awani Agrawal

Maybe we are all tired,
but too afraid to say,
so we dress our wounds in smiles
and carry on each day.

We wake up with our worries,
and sleep with dreams delayed,
keep promises to everyone,
while our own hopes slowly fade.

We answer, "I'm doing fine,"
though our hearts may disagree,
we become what others need,
forgetting who we wish to be.

We carry family, work, and dreams,
with courage on display,
then quietly fall apart



when the world has walked away.

Maybe strength is not pretending
that nothing ever hurts—
maybe it is knowing when
to rest between the storms.

Because beneath our practiced smiles,
beneath the things we hide,
we are all just human hearts
trying to survive the tide.

Maybe we are all tired—
and maybe that is okay;
we don't always need to be strong,
sometimes we just need a day.

Just inches apart!

Vidisha Chaudhary

He looks at me with adorable eyes,
And pats my head,
As if he was calming a child,
Who's hands were trembling and eyes were read.

There's a softness between the space between us,
A question we both quietly defend,
A fragile wish we never voice,
A hope we're scared to let ascend.

I was crying like a helpless child,
Tears slipping faster than I could hide,
And then he stood there firm and gentle,
Like the whole world could break,
But never on his watch,
Not until he is on my side!

And when he finally calmed me,
When my sobs felt quite and slow,
He smiled with that soft warm pride,
The kind the only I know,
In that moment I wanted
so desperately it almost hurt,
to rise on my toes, just once,
and kiss his forehead tenderly,
as a thank you,
as a confession,
as everything I'm too scared to blurt.

And though we stand just inches apart,
Close enough to feel what could begin,
I wonder in the hush Between hearts ,
If we both feel it ,
Why don't we let it in?



Tides Of The Heart

Anusha N

There are so many things that bloom within my heart
Which in a daily routine are left behind the past,
A different hue, a different story each day
Within the throes of passions my soul will stray.

Like a thick fog was the night dispelled by dawn,
With birdsong, greetings, as morning came on
And as the sun climbed into that first flush of light,
My soul found room in all things, room to brighten

As if to fly with wings outspread upon the breeze.
As old memories in silent places, arise
With dreams of wings on which the soul could flee,
New life began in every heart, to beat or beat

Within the ebb and flow of chats and laughter,
And fears of rifts that words may cause later,
There came in silence that in hearts is bred,
Views of what may come, and what may spread.

Then on life's page, whose turning none can check
The words I'd penned with others' words, now left
And in a new world's chapter I was thrown,
The feel of yesterday's emotions, overthrown.

Then even dreams that in my heart had flown,
Found footing in a new beginning's tone
At the last line, where parting words have stood
There bloomed a silver light, where heart's frontiers may be viewed.



Who would I be?

Daniya Danish

Who Would I Be

But then again, who would I be
without bleeding the mundane into dirges,
without warping small mercies into omens,
clutching at moments like corpses I refuse to bury?

Who would I be
without this hunger that loves through the knife?
If I walked unweighted, if I slept un-haunted,
if my chest did not keep a graveyard of unsent letters

who would I be if I were clean, if I were hollow?

Only a polished stone,
with no crypts below.
No requiems to name,
no ruin to bestow.

I'd be exorcised of longing,
unblistered, unblessed.
But then again,
who would I be
if I excised
this beautiful, blighted way of existing?



To The Girl of August 10th

Divy Bhawnani

I never knew a date could carry so much light,
Until August tenth came walking into my life.
Just another summer morning, just another turning year,
Until somehow your existence made everything seem clear.

You were the first girl
I ever wanted to try for,
The first name that made my restless hands
Reach for something more.

So I learned.

God, I learned.

I learned the things you liked,
The things you loved, the things you'd say,
The little pieces of your world
I gathered day by day.

I learned to crochet for you,
Though my fingers knew nothing at all,
I fought with every tangled thread,
I watched every crooked stitch fall.

And I'd start again.

And again.

And again.

Because somehow every little failure
Felt worth it if the final thing
Could someday make you smile.

I learned the random things you mentioned,
Things I never would've known,
Turned passing words into long nights
With a screen lighting up my room alone.

You said a thing.



I searched it.

You liked a thing.

I learned it.

You laughed.

I remembered.

You spoke.

I listened.

And somewhere in that endless collecting
Of pieces that belonged to you,
I began forgetting
Which pieces still belonged to me too.

Then came those words.

The ones I always knew might come.

“We’re better as friends.”

And I smiled.

God, I smiled.

I told you I understood.
I told you it was alright.
Then I went home and cried so hard
I couldn't make my breathing right.

Because how do I explain
That you weren't merely someone I knew?

You were the first person
I ever looked at and thought,

“I want to become better
because of you.”

And how do I explain
That sometimes wanting isn't enough?

That I could learn every language,
Every craft, every song,
I could memorize the stars above
And still get one answer wrong.

How do I learn
To make your heart choose mine?

How do I teach my hands
To hold something they cannot make?

How do I stop loving you
When loving you has become
the easiest thing I know to do?

I don't blame you.

I never could.

You never promised me forever.
You never promised me your heart.
You only gave me honesty,
And somehow honesty tore me apart.

You said "friend."

I heard a thousand things.

I heard every hope collapsing,
Every dream losing its wings.

And still I loved you.

Still.

Even when I cried,
Even when I swore I'd stop,
Even when I put your name away
And told myself I'd finally let it drop.

It always came back.

You always came back.

In songs.

In streets.

In stupid little things.

In yarn between my fingers.

In August tenth.

Especially August tenth.

I wonder if you ever knew
How much of me you occupied.

How many nights I spoke to you
Without you being by my side.

How many times I imagined
A life that never came to be.

How many versions of tomorrow
Had you standing next to me.

I think that's what scares me most.

Not that you said no.

But that my mind kept saying yes.

Yes, maybe tomorrow.

Yes, maybe someday.

Yes, maybe she'll see.

Yes, maybe she'll finally look at me
and find what I kept trying to be.

And I kept walking with that thought.

Down the street.

Past the shops.

Past the lights.

Past people laughing underneath the evening sky.

Thinking about your birthday.

Thinking about your smile.

Thinking about the things I'd make you.

Thinking about you.

Always you.

And I never noticed
the two headlights coming.

Never noticed the engine.

Never noticed the road.

Never noticed the car.

Only the honks blaring,

but even those sounded distant,

because the only blare inside my mind

was your name.

I turned too late.

The world became headlights,

glass,

metal,

sky,

and then

nothing.

And somewhere,

a piece of yarn I had been carrying

fell quietly onto the road.

A stupid little unfinished thing.

Something I had meant to finish for you.

And the strangest thing is,

the world did not stop.

The traffic moved.

The lights changed.

Someone cursed at the driver.

Someone called for help.

Someone looked away.

And August tenth
was still waiting on the calendar.

The girl of August tenth
was still alive somewhere,

laughing,

breathing,

living a life
that had never belonged to me.

And perhaps that's the cruelest ending
a love like mine could ever know.

Not that you rejected me.

Not that I couldn't have you.

But that the world kept turning
without ever knowing

how loudly

I had loved you.

So if you ever wonder
why there is no ending to this letter,

why the last few words
were never written,

know only this:

I loved you enough
to learn a hundred things.

I loved you enough
to lose myself in them.

And for one terrible moment,

I loved you so completely

that I forgot

to look

where I was going.

The girl of August tenth.

That was you.

And this,

for better or worse,

was me.

The Land Woman

Monisha Manindra

The old mansion stood at the edge of the village like a forgotten kingdom.

Once, it had belonged to one of the wealthiest families in the district. Its enormous wooden doors, high ceilings, fading pillars and long corridors still carried the grandeur of another era. Time had cracked its walls and swallowed much of the family's wealth, but it had not completely defeated the house. Even in its broken state, it remained majestic.

And now, it belonged to Malarvizhi.

She was in her middle forties, unmarried, proud, sharp-tongued and fiercely attached to the mansion. Her life had gradually narrowed into those walls. The people who had once surrounded her were gone, her family's fortune had disappeared, and the house had become both her possession and her prison.

The only person regularly entering that lonely world was Sujatha, her young house servant.

Unfortunately for Sujatha, Malarvizhi's temper was legendary.

Every morning brought another complaint—dust left on a table, clothes folded incorrectly, vessels not washed properly. Sujatha endured it because she needed the work, though she often escaped Malarvizhi's anger by gossiping about the villagers whenever she found an opportunity.

Sujatha was secretly in love with Charanam, a young man from the same village. Charanam, unlike most people, had always regarded Malarvizhi almost like a mother figure. He respected her despite her difficult personality.

Malarvizhi, however, never returned that affection.

Then, one afternoon, everything changed.

A letter arrived from Chennai.

The moment Malarvizhi saw the name written on the envelope, the years seemed to disappear.

Arjunan.

Her childhood love.

The boy she had once loved during her school days had grown into a successful actor. Their lives had separated long ago, and she had never imagined that he would remember her, let alone write to her.

His letter contained a request.

He was searching for a large ancestral property for an upcoming film. Her mansion was perfect. If she permitted them to shoot there, it would be a great honour for the production.

Malarvizhi agreed almost immediately.

But beneath her formal acceptance, she wrote something far more personal. She told him about her loneliness, the emptiness of her life and how the mansion had become unbearably silent.

For the first time in years, she allowed herself to admit that she was lonely.

Along with the letter came the film's script.

The story was about a woman whose husband lived across the city, creating a complicated tale of love, separation and longing.

Malarvizhi read it late into the night.

That night, she dreamed of Arjunan.

Not the boy she remembered, but the man he had become.

In her dream, they were young again. They walked through the mansion together, laughed together and looked at one another with the same tenderness they once had.

She woke with tears in her eyes.

For the first time in decades, she began to believe that perhaps life had not completely forgotten her.

Then February arrived.

The production team entered the mansion with cameras, lights, costumes and equipment.

Arjunan arrived with his co-stars, Girishan and Venilla. Arjunan and Venilla would stay in the mansion, while some of the other crew members stayed at a nearby guest house.

Malarvizhi saw him again.

And everything she had tried to bury returned.

Arjunan still possessed the same smile.

The same warmth.

The same gentle manner.

But something had changed.

There was a restraint in him, something invisible that seemed to hold him back whenever he came too close to her. It was as though there was a boundary around him that he had no intention of crossing.

Then Malarvizhi noticed Venilla.

She was the female lead opposite Arjunan.

Venilla was in her late twenties, beautiful without appearing vain, composed without seeming cold. She was unusually peaceful. She seemed comfortable around Arjunan, and there was a quiet familiarity between them.

Malarvizhi began watching them.

Every smile.

Every glance.

Every small gesture.

She started imagining meanings that might not have existed.

At night, her dreams became increasingly romantic.

In those dreams, Arjunan belonged to her.

The loneliness of forty-five years seemed to dissolve. She imagined a future where he stayed, where the mansion became a home again, where the emptiness finally disappeared.

But when she woke, Venilla was still there.

Her jealousy slowly became cruelty.

Malarvizhi began treating Venilla badly, finding excuses to humiliate her and occasionally making indirect threats. Venilla never retaliated. She simply remained calm.

That calmness irritated Malarvizhi even more.

Surajatha soon became her source of gossip.

She would whisper about Venilla and Girishan, suggesting that perhaps something existed between them. Malarvizhi listened eagerly, feeding her own suspicions.

Eventually, she repeated those accusations to Arjunan.

She spoke bitterly about Venilla, questioning her character and suggesting that she was not the respectable woman everyone believed her to be.

Something changed in Arjunan immediately.

His warmth disappeared.

He became visibly angry—not because Malarvizhi had insulted him, but because she had attacked someone else's character without knowing the truth.

He made it clear that she had no right to spread such gossip.

Malarvizhi was devastated.

The man she had imagined would understand her had defended another woman instead.

Her jealousy turned uglier.

She treated Venilla even worse.

Yet Venilla remained strangely peaceful.

Then, one night, everything appeared to change.

Malarvizhi was alone in the darkness, crying silently.

Arjunan found her.

For a moment, the years disappeared again.

He comforted her, held her in his arms and reassured her that only one week remained before the shoot ended.

To Malarvizhi, that embrace meant everything.

She interpreted it as a promise.

She believed that perhaps the distance between them was finally disappearing. Perhaps after all these years, fate was returning Arjunan to her.

She spent the remaining week dreaming about what their lives could become.

Then the shooting ended.

The lights disappeared.

The cameras were packed.

The mansion became a house again rather than a film set.

And Arjunan left.

Malarvizhi waited.

One day.

Two days.

Three.

Five days passed.

She expected a letter from him.

She believed he would write something that would explain everything.

Then Sujatha arrived carrying an envelope.

There was another smaller envelope attached separately.

Malarvizhi noticed it and smiled bitterly.

She assumed it was something from Arjunan's production team.

With a strange mixture of amusement and resentment, she opened the separate envelope first, almost expecting some explanation about money or the use of her mansion.

Instead, she found Venilla's name.

Her smile vanished.

She began reading.

The letter was gentle.

Almost painfully gentle.

Venilla told her that she knew Malarvizhi might be heartbroken, but she could not bear watching her wait for someone who could never belong to her.

Then came the truth.

Arjunan was in his middle forties.

Venilla was in her late twenties.

And they had been married for two years.

Malarvizhi stopped breathing.

Her hands began trembling.

She read the sentence again.

And again.

Then came the photographs.

Their wedding.

Their rituals.

Their smiles.

The garlands.

The sacred ceremony.

The jewellery.

The photographs of the celebrations.

Everything was real.

There was no misunderstanding.

No secret romance waiting to happen.

No future between Malarvizhi and Arjunan.

The future she had constructed inside her head collapsed in an instant.

Suddenly, every moment made sense.

Venilla's calmness.

Her lack of jealousy.

Her quiet confidence.

Arjunan's restraint.

His protectiveness toward Venilla.

The invisible boundary Malarvizhi had felt around him.

It had never been uncertainty.

It had been loyalty.

Malarvizhi sat alone in the enormous mansion, surrounded by photographs that had destroyed the dream she had built during the happiest weeks of her life.

The tragedy was not that Arjunan had betrayed her.

He had never promised her anything.

The tragedy was that she had mistaken kindness for love, memory for destiny and loneliness for a second chance.

The mansion returned to silence.

Weeks passed.

Malarvizhi slowly returned to the woman she had been before Arjunan's arrival.

She scolded Sujatha again.

She walked through the old corridors again.

She lived beneath the same cracked ceilings and beside the same fading pillars.

But something inside her had changed.

She no longer waited for footsteps outside the gate.

She no longer dreamed of letters from Chennai.

And whenever she remembered Arjunan, she did not hate him.

She simply remembered the boy she once loved, the man he became, and the brief illusion of happiness that had entered her lonely house before leaving it even emptier than before.

The mansion remained standing.

Majestic.

Broken.

Silent.

Just like her heart.

No Map for the Earth

Ayesha Siddiqui

They drew a line across the earth,
And called one side yours, one side mine.
They gave the soil different names,
And fought through the borders they drew.

But tell me, can the wind read borders?
Does the moon know where it should shine?
Does a river stop at a painted mark
And say, "This water is mine"?

I have seen a mother cross a distance
With nothing but hope in her eyes,
I have seen strangers share their bread
Beneath the same enormous skies.

A child does not ask which land you're from,
Before reaching out a hand.
Perhaps we learn about borders later,
When someone teaches us to understand.

These are borders made of papers,
These are borders made of fear,
But love has never needed a passport
To reach the person standing near.

So let the roads keep their lines,
Let the walls keep their stone.
I believe every human heart
Was meant to be a home.

For beyond every border,
Beyond every name,
We are carrying the same sunlight,
Breathing the same flame.



And perhaps the greatest journey
Is not crossing land or sea—
It is crossing the little borders
We have built inside of me.

CORRECTION

Jo Naseeb Mein Na Aya

Mohul Sarkar

Suna hai guftugu krne ki adat h,
Fir chalo kuch tak saath chal lete h,
Suna hai shikayatein ki gunzaish h,
Fir chalo kuch pal saath chal lete h.

Abhi to ek pal h,
Ye pal bhi beet jyega,
Mein bhi beet jaunga,
Pal mein jeena chahte ho?
Kya khub chahte ho,
Chahat to mujhe bhi satati h,
Fir chalo kuch pal saath chal lete h.

Suna hai chaand se jyada,
Sundar muskati roshni deti surat,
Chalo mana phir bhi wo to chaand h,
Tukra h ek asmaan ka,
Par ye zamana sacchai se murchi hui h,
Chaand to h tukra uska.

Gulab todna chahte ho?
Ye kaisi chahat,
Jaha katon ki bagichon mein khub khudakna chahti ho.
Chalo mana gulab hoke gulab todna chahte ho,
Kaaton ko apna heera banana chahte ho,
Abhi toh filhaal thodi aur dastaan mehfal h,
Chalo kuch aur pal ek saath chal lete h.

Chalo ek baat Kehte h,
Mein mazdoor apni qirdar ki tehra,
Jo naseeb mein naa aye,
Usko chahne wala mein ek musafir tehra.

Na kisika noor ban paya,
Naa kisika noor mil paya,



Mein kho gaya iss zamane mein,
Warna mein to khudse pyar kr beththa.

Khayalon ke beech beth ke sochta rehta huin mein,
Kaisi dikhti h wo mere inn ankhon se,
Mana ki aansuon ne andha kr rkha h mujhe,
Mein dekhna chahta hu ki kaise nhi bhula pata huin use.

Aab to dafnaya jaa rha mujhe kafan mein,
Safed chadar lipta hua ek adha adhura jism aur kuch khwahishein,
Ab aur intekaam nhi dikhta in ankhon mein,
Phir bhi sata rahi h kuch mehfilein,
Rok dena mera janaza ek khirki ke saamne,
Kash wo ek baar jhanke,
Aur phirse ye dil dhadak jaye.

The acoustic historian

Tejashri Ramesh

Arthur Pendelton was a deaf restoration architect who understood buildings through vibration rather than sight alone. In 1888, he took on the restoration of the Grand St. Jude Library, a half-ruined Victorian structure slated for demolition in the heart of London.

While mapping the foundation, Arthur noticed strange anomalies in the masonry. The interior walls were lined with porous, hollow clay tiles shaped like acoustic horns, running in deliberate spirals toward the central dome.

Arthur realized the entire building was a giant acoustic recording device. The porous terra-cotta acted as a natural resonance trap, storing high-frequency sound vibrations in microscopic air pockets within the unglazed clay. By designing a specialized bronze stylus attached to a brass diaphragm, Arthur found he could press the instrument against the walls and play back preserved voices like a phonograph needle on wax.

The first whispers he uncovered were innocuous—scholars asking for books, footsteps, coughing. But as he probed deeper into the sealed basement archives, the tone changed.

He unseated a series of secrets recorded in 1842: a secret society of city councilors and industrial barons had met in the library's cellar to orchestrate a series of intentional bank collapses, seizing land to build the modern railway lines. Among the conspirators was Lord Thomas Sterling—the direct ancestor of the current mayor overseeing Arthur's restoration project.



When Arthur presented his structural findings to the city council to save the library from demolition, Mayor Sterling recognized the danger immediately. That night, a fire mysteriously broke out in the library's lower east wing.

Arthur rushed inside, not to save the paper manuscripts, but to salvage the acoustic bricks. Working in smoke-filled air, he carved out the primary master-brick containing Lord Sterling's recorded confession. Using the acoustic playback device in front of the press and city inspectors the next morning, Arthur amplified the voice of the deceased conspirator across the town square.

The St. Jude Library was declared a national acoustic landmark, and Arthur established the world's first Department of Architectural Archiving, dedicated to listening to the secrets built into the world's oldest stones

Where Maps End, Hearts Begin

Purna Jha is a source of inspiration in her creative journey. She excels as a graphic designer and illustrator while pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree in Animation from Amity University, Kolkata. Her creative milestones include completing her BFA Animation course and contributing to social causes through volunteering with 'Bhumi', an NGO.

PurnaJha♡

They drew the world
with ink and lines,

calling one side *mine*
and the other *yours*.

Mountains became boundaries,
rivers became divisions,

and the earth

which had never chosen a side
was taught the language of separation.

Yet every morning,
the same sun
rose without asking
which nation deserved its light.

The same rain
kissed every field,
never pausing
to read a flag.



I once met a child
standing near a border.

He looked at the fence,
then at the birds
flying freely above it.

With innocent eyes he asked,
*"If the sky belongs to everyone...
why doesn't the land?"*

No one answered.

Because some questions
are too honest
for the world we have built.

Beyond every checkpoint
is another mother
waiting for her child.

Beyond every uniform
is a heartbeat
that dreams of returning home.

Beyond every language
is a tear

that means the same thing
in every corner of the earth.

A soldier protects his nation
not because he hates

the people across the border,
but because love
sometimes wears the uniform
of duty.

And peace
peace is never born
from louder weapons.

It begins
when one heart
chooses compassion
over hatred,
understanding
over fear,
and hope
over revenge.

Perhaps maps
will always have borders.

Perhaps nations
will always have names.

But love,
kindness,
and humanity
have never needed a passport.

For where maps end,

hearts begin
beating to the same rhythm,
crying the same tears,
dreaming beneath
the same endless sky.
And maybe,
one day,
the world will remember
what the birds
have always known
that no line
can ever divide
the horizon.

The Day Borders Became Bridges

Purna Jha is a source of inspiration in her creative journey. She excels as a graphic designer and illustrator while pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree in Animation from Amity University, Kolkata. Her creative milestones include completing her BFA Animation course and contributing to social causes through volunteering with 'Bhumi', an NGO.

PurnaJha

There was a day
when the wind forgot
which country it belonged to.

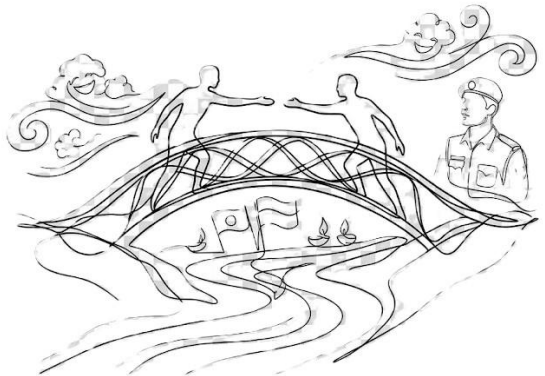
It carried laughter
from one land to another,
never stopping
to ask for permission.

The river flowed as always,
never knowing
that humans had drawn
a line across its heart.

On one side,
a mother lit a lamp,
praying for her son.

On the other,
another mother whispered
the very same prayer.

Their languages were different,



their flags were different,
but their tears
spoke the same language.

A soldier stood
guarding the border,
his hands steady,
his heart carrying
the weight of countless goodbyes.

He did not dream of war.
He dreamed of home
of warm meals,
familiar voices,
and the embrace
that waited beyond duty.

For every uniform
beats a human heart,
and every heartbeat
longs for peace.

Then came a morning
unlike any other.

The sky wore no colors
except hope.

Hands that had lived apart
reached toward one another.

Fear loosened its grip.

Hatred grew quiet.

And the walls

that had divided hearts

began to crumble,

not with force,

but with kindness.

That was the day

borders became bridges.

Not because the maps changed,

but because people did.

They chose understanding

over anger,

compassion

over suspicion,

and humanity

over pride.

For the strongest bridge

is not built

with stone or steel

it is built

when one heart

has the courage

to trust another.

May we live
for the day
when every child
learns about borders
only from history books,
and every map
becomes a reminder
that while nations may be divided,
the human heart
never truly is.

Because the greatest journeys
have never been
from one country to another
they have always been
from one heart
to another.

THE NIGHT SERAPHINE BROKE

Shannon Dove is a gothic fantasy author and mixed-media AI artist crafting storm-born worlds filled with emotion, myth, and shadow. As founder of MoonShadow Writes, she blends atmospheric storytelling with vivid illustration, creating immersive series like *The Nightrose Chronicles* and *The Night Seraphine Broke*. Her work explores burdens, memory, and magic through deeply human characters shaped by darkness and light.

Shannon Dove

The storm didn't arrive with warning. It didn't crawl over the ridge or gather politely above the river the way Ashvale storms usually did. It appeared in a single violent instant, ripping the sky open with a sound like the world itself had cracked.

Seraphine Hale was standing on her porch when it happened, her hands wrapped around a mug of cooling tea. She'd been restless all day, pacing the boards, staring at the horizon as if waiting for something she couldn't name. The air felt wrong—too still, too heavy, too expectant. Even the birds had gone quiet.

Then the sky tore.

A vertical line of light split the heavens from top to bottom, so bright it burned through the clouds and lit the entire town in a blinding flash. The windows rattled. The church bell rang without a hand touching it. People screamed from inside their homes.

Seraphine didn't move.

Her breath caught as she stared at the impossible sight. The rift wasn't just light—it was two lights, two worlds pressed together in a single wound.

On the left side, the sky burned. Flames curled upward from the clouds, orange and gold, licking the edges of the tear like a living creature.

Lightning crackled through the fire, jagged and furious.

On the right side, the sky glowed with cold moonlight. Silver poured down like water, illuminating the rooftops and casting long shadows across the street. Stars shimmered behind the tear, visible even though the sun hadn't fully set.

Fire on one side. Moonlight on the other.

Seraphine felt something pull inside her chest—a thread tightening, tugging her forward. She stepped toward the edge of the porch without meaning to.

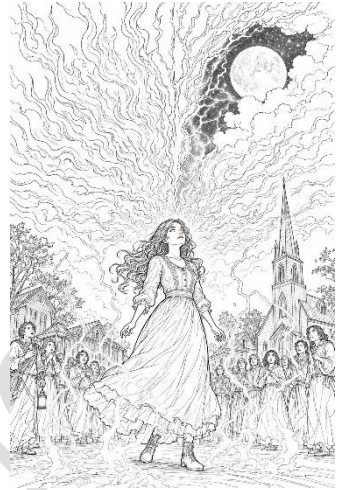
The storm noticed.

The fire side flared brighter. The moonlight deepened. The rift widened by an inch, then another.

A bolt of lightning shot downward, striking the ground ten feet in front of her. The impact shook the porch, rattling the boards beneath her boots. Sparks danced across the dirt like tiny blue creatures.

Seraphine didn't scream. She didn't run. She didn't even flinch.

She stared at the lightning, and the lightning stared back.



Heat bloomed behind her right eye. Cold behind her left. She gasped and pressed her hand to her face, but the sensation only intensified.

Her right eye glowed electric blue.

Her left glowed molten amber.

The storm responded.

The fire side roared.

The moonlight shimmered.

The rift widened again.

Doors slammed open across the street. Neighbors ran outside, shouting, pointing, panicking. Someone screamed her name. Someone else screamed “cursed.”

Seraphine didn’t look at them.

She stepped off the porch.

The lightning bowed.

And the storm whispered her name.

The storm swallowed Seraphine in a rush of heat and cold, fire and moonlight twisting around her like two living ribbons. For a heartbeat she couldn’t see anything—only brightness, only color, only the sensation of being held by something far larger than herself. The air hummed against her skin, vibrating through her bones, making her feel weightless and unbearably heavy at the same time.

Then the world snapped back into focus.

She stood in the street, but it wasn’t the same street she’d stepped into. The houses were still there, but their edges blurred as if she were seeing them through water. The church steeple flickered between shadow and flame. The ground beneath her boots glowed faintly, pulsing with the rhythm of the storm.

The rift hovered above her, stretching from the clouds to the earth like a celestial scar. Fire roared on one side, moonlight shimmered on the other, and lightning arced between them in graceful, impossible curves. It wasn’t

random. It wasn't chaotic. It moved like choreography—like a dance she didn't yet know the steps to.

The storm whispered again.

Seraphine.

Her name echoed inside her skull, vibrating through her ribs. She pressed a hand to her chest, trying to steady her breathing. The storm wasn't speaking aloud. It was speaking inside her. Through her. Around her. She felt it in her blood, in her heartbeat, in the strange glow behind her eyes.

She turned slowly, scanning the street. The townspeople had backed away, forming a wide circle around her. Their faces were pale, terrified, wide-eyed. Some clutched their children. Others held lanterns or crosses. A few whispered prayers. One woman sobbed openly.

Seraphine didn't blame them. She didn't understand what was happening either.

A bolt of lightning curved downward, striking the ground beside her. It didn't explode. It didn't burn. It simply bent, lowering itself like a creature bowing its head. The blue glow reflected in her right eye, intensifying the electric color.

Another bolt followed, this one amber, bending toward her left side. The heat brushed her cheek, warm and familiar, like a hand she'd known all her life.

The storm wasn't attacking her.

It was greeting her.

A figure pushed through the crowd—Soren Ashfall, lantern in hand. His face was pale, but his eyes were steady. He didn't look afraid. He looked... aware. As if he'd been waiting for this moment.

"Seraphine," he said, voice low but clear. "Don't move."

She didn't.

Soren stepped closer, the lantern glowing faintly. The storm reacted instantly—lightning arced toward the lantern, circling it like curious serpents. The glass flickered with blue and gold light.

Soren's breath caught. "It's responding to you."

Seraphine swallowed hard. "I don't know what it wants."

Soren's gaze lifted to the rift. "I think it wants you to listen."

The storm whispered again—louder this time, more insistent.

Seraphine.

She took a shaky breath.

And the lightning bowed once more.

The lightning bowed again, lowering itself like a creature offering its head for her hand. Seraphine stared at it, breath trembling, heart pounding so hard she felt it in her throat. The storm whispered her name once more—louder now, urgent, insistent.

Soren stood at her side, lantern glowing with a strange mix of blue and amber light. "Seraphine," he said softly, "it's calling you."

She swallowed. "Why me?"

"I don't know." His voice was steady, but his eyes were wide. "But it's not trying to hurt you."

Another bolt curved downward, striking the ground behind her. The air hummed, vibrating through her bones. The rift widened, stretching across the sky like a wound that refused to close. Fire roared on one side, moonlight shimmered on the other, and the lightning danced between them like threads stitching two worlds together.

The townspeople backed farther away. Some cried. Some prayed. Some whispered her name like a curse. But none dared step closer.

Seraphine took a slow breath. The storm's pull tightened inside her chest, tugging her forward. She felt it in her heartbeat, in the glow behind her eyes, in the strange warmth spreading through her fingertips.

She stepped forward.

The lightning responded instantly, bending toward her like a bowing sentinel. The fire side of the rift flared, casting orange light across her skin.

The moonlight side deepened, bathing her in silver. The storm wasn't just reacting—it was welcoming her.

Soren reached out as if to stop her, but the lantern in his hand flickered violently, warning him back. He froze, staring at her with a mixture of awe and fear.

“Seraphine,” he whispered, “be careful.”

She nodded, though she wasn't sure caution mattered anymore. The storm had already chosen her. She could feel it—an ancient awareness pressing against her mind, searching her memories, tasting her fear, recognizing something inside her she didn't yet understand.

She took another step.

The lightning parted for her, forming a narrow path of glowing blue and gold. The ground beneath her boots pulsed with light, each step echoing like a heartbeat. The rift lowered slightly, as if bending to meet her.

The storm whispered again—clearer this time, unmistakable.

Seraphine.

She reached the center of the street. The wind swirled around her, lifting her hair, brushing her cheeks with alternating warmth and cold. The fire side roared. The moonlight shimmered. The lightning bowed.

She lifted her chin.

“I'm not afraid,” she said, though her voice trembled.

The storm answered with a pulse of light that washed over her like a wave.

She stepped into the rift.

Fire and moonlight wrapped around her, swirling in a spiral of color and sound. The world vanished. The storm embraced her fully, pulling her into its heart. She felt weightless, suspended between two skies, two worlds, two destinies.

And then she heard it—clear, resonant, ancient.

Her name.

Not whispered.

Not echoed.

Spoken.

The storm remembered her.

CORRECTION

THE NIGHTROSE CHRONICLES

Shannon Dove is a gothic fantasy author and mixed-media AI artist crafting storm-born worlds filled with emotion, myth, and shadow. As founder of MoonShadow Writes, she blends atmospheric storytelling with vivid illustration, creating immersive series like The Nightrose Chronicles and The Night Seraphine Broke. Her work explores burdens, memory, and magic through deeply human characters shaped by darkness and light.

Shannon Dove

Based on The BOOK: The Man Who Carried Midnight

Ashvale had always been a town that believed in old things. Old stories, old rituals, old warnings whispered by people who never questioned where they came from. And nothing in Ashvale was older than the Midnight Walk.

Every night, when the clock tower struck twelve, one man carried the lantern through the streets. Not a lantern for light, not a lantern for warmth—this lantern carried burdens. Grief, guilt, heartbreak, shame, fear. The things people never said aloud. The things they hid behind polite smiles and quiet routines. The lantern absorbed them, drawing the heaviness out of the town so the people could sleep.

Tonight, that man was Soren Ashfall.

He stepped out of his small stone house, the lantern hanging from his right hand. Its glass glowed a soft, steady blue—the color of calm, the color of release. The metal frame was old iron, etched with symbols no one alive could translate. The handle was worn smooth from generations of hands. Soren's father had carried it. His grandfather. His great-grandfather. The lantern chose one keeper per generation, and it had chosen him.

The air was cool, the kind of crisp midnight that made the cobblestones shine. Ashvale slept quietly, windows dark, curtains drawn. Only the lantern's glow lit Soren's path as he walked down Marrowridge Avenue.

He felt the first burden before he reached the bakery.

A heaviness pressed against his chest—someone’s sorrow, thick and aching. The lantern responded instantly, its blue glow deepening. A soft pulse of light rippled through the glass, and the weight lifted from Soren’s ribs as the lantern absorbed it.

He exhaled slowly. “Easy,” he murmured, though the lantern didn’t need reassurance. It had been doing this for centuries.

But tonight... something felt different.

The lantern pulsed again, but not with the usual soft blue. A faint gold shimmer flickered inside the glass—brief, subtle, gone in an instant. Soren stopped walking. He held the lantern up, turning it slightly to catch the moonlight.

Blue.

Still blue.

Still normal.

But he had seen it.

Gold.

A color the lantern had never shown.

He continued walking, slower now, listening to the quiet hum of the lantern. Another burden brushed against him—fear, sharp and cold. The lantern absorbed it, but again, the faint gold shimmer flickered inside.

Soren’s pulse quickened.

The lantern wasn’t supposed to remember burdens. It was supposed to release them at dawn, emptying itself so it could begin again the next night. But gold meant memory. Gold meant something was staying inside.

Gold meant change.

Soren tightened his grip on the handle. “Not tonight,” he whispered. “Please.”

But the lantern pulsed again—blue, then gold.

And Soren Ashfall realized the Midnight Walk would not be the same tonight.

Soren's steps slowed as he reached the edge of Ashvale's narrow hill road. The lantern pulsed again—blue, then gold—like a heartbeat struggling to stay steady. He tightened his grip on the handle, feeling the warmth of the metal seep into his palm. The lantern had never warmed before. It had always been cool, detached, neutral. Tonight it felt almost alive.

He turned the corner toward the Hale residence.

Seraphine Hale sat on her front steps, elbows on her knees, her face buried in her hands. Her dark hair fell forward like a curtain, hiding everything except the exhaustion in her posture. She didn't look up when Soren approached. She didn't seem to hear him at all.

The lantern reacted before he did.

A heavy weight slammed into Soren's chest—sharp, suffocating, overwhelming. It wasn't his burden. It wasn't his pain. It was hers. The lantern pulsed violently, its blue glow deepening, pulling the weight out of the air like a sponge absorbing water.

Soren staggered, breath catching. "Seraphine?"

She lifted her head slowly. Her eyes were red, tired, hollow. "You shouldn't be here."

"The lantern brought me," he said softly.

She let out a humorless laugh. "Of course it did."

Another wave of heaviness pressed against him—fear, grief, guilt, all tangled together. The lantern pulsed again, absorbing it, but this time the gold shimmer didn't flicker and vanish. It stayed. A thin ribbon of gold curled inside the glass like smoke.

Soren's stomach tightened. "Seraphine... how long have you been carrying this?"

She looked away. "Long enough."

He stepped closer, lowering the lantern. The glow illuminated her face, revealing the tremble in her jaw, the tightness around her eyes, the way her shoulders sagged under invisible weight.

"You could have told someone," he whispered.

"I did." Her voice cracked. "No one listened."

The lantern pulsed again—blue, then gold, then blue. It was struggling. Soren could feel it. The burdens weren't releasing cleanly. They were sticking, clinging, refusing to dissolve.

"Seraphine," he said gently, "the lantern isn't supposed to remember. But it's holding on to yours."

She closed her eyes. "I'm sorry."

"You don't need to apologize."

"Yes, I do." Her voice broke. "Because I don't know how to stop."

Soren knelt in front of her, lantern between them. "Let it take what it can."

She shook her head. "It won't be enough."

The lantern pulsed again—this time violently. Gold flared inside the glass, swirling like a storm trapped in a bottle. Soren gasped as a memory flashed across the lantern's surface—brief, distorted, impossible.

A crib.

A baby's cry.

Seraphine's voice whispering, "It's okay, Asher. Mama's here."

Soren froze.

The lantern had shown him a memory.

It had never done that before.

Seraphine's breath hitched. "You saw it."

"Yes," Soren whispered. "I saw him."

The lantern pulsed again—blue, gold, blue.

And somewhere inside the house, baby Asher Nightrose began to cry.

Asher's cry cut through the night like a thread snapping. Seraphine flinched, her hands curling into fists against her knees. Soren rose slowly, lantern in hand, its glow shifting in frantic pulses—blue, gold, blue, gold—like a heartbeat struggling to find its rhythm.

“He feels it,” Seraphine whispered, voice trembling. “He always feels it.”

Soren turned toward the house. “Let me see him.”

She hesitated, fear flickering across her face. Not fear of Soren—fear of what the lantern might do. But Asher’s cry sharpened, rising into a desperate wail, and she stood, wiping her cheeks with the back of her hand.

“Come,” she said softly.

Inside, the house was dim, lit only by a single candle on the table. The lantern’s glow filled the space, casting blue and gold shadows across the walls. Seraphine led Soren down the narrow hallway to a small room where a wooden crib sat beneath the window.

Asher Nightrose lay inside, tiny hands curled into fists, his face red from crying. His little leg braces glinted in the lantern light—silver straps, polished buckles, soft leather padding. He kicked weakly, the metal catching the glow.

The lantern reacted instantly.

A pulse of gold flared inside the glass—bright, sharp, undeniable. Soren gasped as the lantern warmed in his hand, hotter than before, almost burning. Asher’s cry faltered, turning into a soft whimper. His eyes—wide, dark, impossibly aware—locked onto the lantern.

And the lantern flickered.

Not blue.

Not gold.

Both.

The colors twisted together, spiraling inside the glass like a storm trapped in a bottle. Soren staggered backward, clutching the handle. “Seraphine... he’s reacting to it.”

She moved to the crib, lifting Asher gently into her arms. His tiny fingers reached toward the lantern, trembling with effort. The glow intensified, swirling faster, brighter, hotter.

“Soren,” she whispered, “what’s happening?”

“I don’t know.” His voice shook. “The lantern has never done this. It’s never responded to a child.”

Asher’s hand stretched farther, reaching for the light. The lantern pulsed again—blue, gold, blue, gold—then suddenly froze, holding both colors at once. The glow steadied, becoming a soft, warm radiance that filled the room.

Soren stared at it, breath caught in his throat. “It’s... calming.”

Seraphine rocked Asher gently. His crying stopped completely. His tiny fingers curled, reaching again, not in fear but in recognition.

The lantern flickered once more—slow, deliberate, almost like a nod.

“Soren,” Seraphine whispered, “it’s choosing him.”

He swallowed hard. “He’s too young.”

“The lantern doesn’t care about age.”

Soren stepped closer, lowering the lantern. Asher reached out, his fingertips brushing the glass.

The lantern glowed brighter.

Gold.

Blue.

Gold.

Blue.

Then both.

A single, steady light.

Soren exhaled, voice barely audible. “The lantern remembers him.”

Seraphine held her son close, tears slipping down her cheeks—not from fear, but from understanding.

Asher Nightrose had been chosen.

Asher’s tiny hand rested against the lantern’s glass, and the glow softened around him, almost protective.

Seraphine rocked him gently, her breath trembling as the room filled with warm light.

Soren stood frozen, realizing the truth settling over them like a quiet revelation.

The lantern wasn't reacting by accident.

It was recognizing its next keeper.

CORRECTION

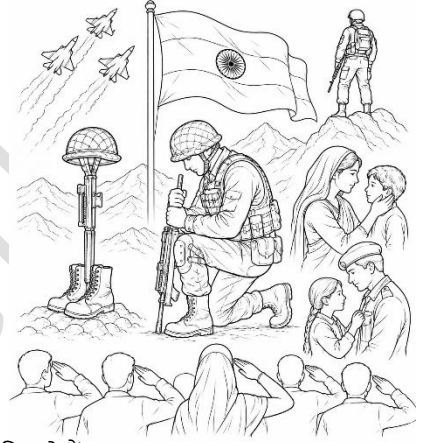
HINDI

देश के जवान

हेलो मेरा नाम नायशा मल्होत्रा है ये कविता है हमारे देश के सैनिकों के लिए जो हमारे लिए अपना सब कुछ कुर्बान कर देते हैं उम्मीद है ये कविता है आप सब के दिल तक जरूर पहुँचेगी।

Naysha Malhotra

बात करते हैं देश के वीरों की,
हिंदुस्तान के सच्चे हीरो की।
जो देश की खातिर हर पल जीते हैं,
हर मुश्किल में ज़हर का प्याला पीते हैं।।
करते हैं मेहनत युद्ध लड़ने खातिर,
खाते हैं शपथ भारत माता को बचाने की।
हंस कर हो जाते हैं कुर्बान देश के खातिर,
खाते हैं शपथ हर जंग लड़ जाने की।।
न परवाह इन्हें सर्द हवाओं और धूप की,
सदा करते हिफ़ाजत देश के स्वरूप की।
अपने परिवार से दूर रहकर अपने देश को बचाते हैं,
हमारे देश के जवान हमारी जान बचाकर अपना फर्ज़ निभाते हैं।।
सरहद की मिट्टी पर हमेशा के लिए वो समा गए,
देश के खातिर अपने परिवार से जुदा हो गए।
लहू की बूंदों से इतिहास लिखते हैं,
वो मौत के सामने भी सीना ताने टिकते हैं।।
बस एक फौजी ही नहीं, पूरा परिवार कुर्बान होता है,
माँ का लाल, बहन का भाई, सुहाग वीरान होता है।
अपने घर के चिराग को जो देश पर बुझा देते हैं,
वो परिवार भी इस मिट्टी पर अपना सब कुछ लुटा देते हैं।।
ये सिर्फ देश नहीं, हमारी भारत माता है,
अपनी माँ की सलामती में हिंदुस्तान का हर जवान लड़ जाता है।
जो देश के लिए लड़ जाए वो देश के जवान हैं,
देश के हर सैनिक को हमारा दिल से सलाम है।।



आज का भारत

Rooted in Jharkhand, I am Abhishek—an observant explorer and emerging writer. I believe that every street corner, quiet conversation, and societal nuance holds a story waiting to be told. Writing has become my ultimate creative haven, giving me the space to process the world around me with intent and curiosity.

Abhishek Kumar Mahato

आज हम किस भारत में साँसे ले रहे हैं ??

जहाँ चारों ओर फैला भ्रष्टाचार है,

ठप पड़ा SYSTEM का कारोबार है !

जहाँ की शिक्षा व्यवस्था की नींव ही कमजोर है.. अरे !! यहाँ तो..

बस महंगाई और गरीबी का ही शोर है।

आज हम किस भारत में साँसे ले रहे हैं ??

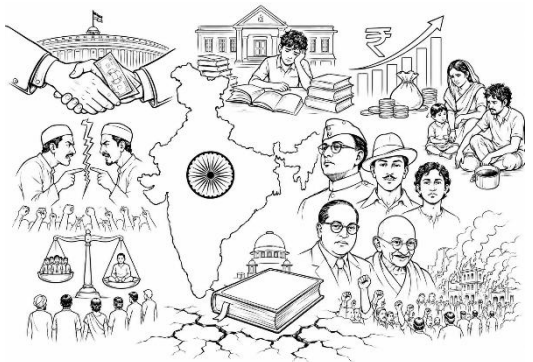
जहाँ मानवता को पीछे धकेल कर,

संप्रदायवाद और जातिवाद का
विष घोला जाता है, दिल पसीजता है
यह देखकर कि..

यहाँ मानवता से ऊपर मजहब को
तौला जाता है।

क्या ये वही भारत है ??

जिसके लिए सुभाष ने अपना लहू
बहाया था,



क्या इसी दिन के लिए ??

भगत और खुदीराम ने फंदे को हँसकर गले लगाया था।

आज **बाबा साहब** की आत्मा भी शायद रोती होगी,

जब अपने संविधान को बिखरते देखती है।

गांधी बापू की रूह भी तड़प उठती होगी,

जब इस देवधरा को नफरत की आग में जलते हुए देखती है।

चूर हुए वो सपने.. जो देशभक्तों ने सजाए थे,

आज पूछती है ये माटी हम सब से...

“क्या ये वही भारत है ??

जिसके लिए अनगिनत वीर काम आए थे !!!”

और फिर एक दिन

Priyanka yadav

और फिर एक दिन,
पुरुष ने चुन ली आज़ादी,
और स्त्री ने
अपना लिया ज़िम्मेदारियों का घूँघट।
पुरुष ने उठाया घर चलाने का बीड़ा,
तो स्त्री ने,
मुस्कान में छुपाकर अपने स्वप्न,
चूल्हे की तपन को अपना लिया।
मटकी का भार,
पाँव के छालों से बातें करता रहा,
और कभी-कभी
अपने हिस्से की रोटी भी दे दी,
बच्चों की भूख के नाम।
उसने प्रेम चुना —
एक ऐसे पुरुष के लिए
जो कभी समझ ही न सका
कि उसकी खामोशी भी प्रेम है।
बेड़ियों में ही गढ़ लिया अपना संसार,



झिलमिलाते सपनों को रख दिया संदूक में,
और उनमें डाल दिया माँ का संस्कार,
पत्नी का त्याग,
बहू का समर्पण।
और फिर एक दिन,
उसके हाथों लगी एक किताब
किताब ने पूछा —
अभी भी समय है, चलेगी मेरे साथ?
उसने मुस्कुराकर,
फिर से बेड़ियाँ चुनीं,
परिवार चुना
ससुराल चुना।
ना जाने मजबूरी थी या मोहब्बत
पर इस बार भी उसने स्वयं से पहले,
सबको चुना ।

आदि मैं, अंत भी मैं

Priyanka Yadav

आदि मैं, अंत भी मैं,
सृष्टि का श्रृंगार भी मैं, संहार भी मैं।
यदि तुम शिव से अचल रहो,
तो मैं सती-सा इंतज़ार भी हूँ।
यदि मेरे समक्ष राम बनो,
तो सीता-सा वनवास भी स्वीकार है।
यदि कृष्ण-सा प्रेम किया,
तो राधा-सा वियोग भी सहूँगी,
और मीरा-सा विष का प्याला भी,
अमृत मानकर पी जाऊँगी।
पर यदि रक्षक से भक्षक बनोगे,
तो काली सा संहार भी मैं।
जो अपने रक्त से सींचे संसार,
वह जननी भी मैं।
आदि मैं और अंत भी मैं ही हूँ।



अतीत का दामन

Saniya Jatav

मैं मन के मिराजों में मग्न ,
जब जानी हक़ीक़त तो हैरान थी।
प्यार में न पड़ने वाली भी आज परमेश्वर के समीप खड़ी थी,
उसे चाह थी सीधी-सुलझी की, मैं शब्दों में उलझी जटिल किताब थी।
छोड़ आई वो दामन, जहाँ मोह का आकर्षण , लेकिन प्यार की कमी थी।
शब्दों की सीमा जहाँ समाप्त , आखिर बात मेरे किरदार पर रुकी थी।
मैंने त्याग दी मेरी पसंद, जब वो एक बात मेरे अंदर घर कर गई।
वो आज भी अनजान मुख्य बात से, मैं बिना बताए, बिना जताए,
कुछ और कहकर वापस आ गई।
बुझा दी आग, लेकिन राख अभी भी ज्वलनशील थी।
किनारे ढूँढ़ता वो मैं लहरों में विलीन थी।
मैं कैसे कह दूँ उसे बुरा,
आखिर वो मेरी पसंद थी।



आसमा की हकदार

Saniya Jatav

मैंने चमकीले तारों में सावले चांद को देखा है,
सफेद बादलों में बारिश की बूंद को देखा है,
हस्ती कलियों के बीच रोते फूल को देखा है,
उस काले बिंदु में अनंत का अनुभव देखा है,
मैंने स्वर्ग सी दुनिया में नर्क को देखा है,
अंधेरी रात में अकेले सिसकते देखा है

सुनो, मैंने उसे अकेले रोता देखा है,

वो देखती घंटों तक सितारों को,
वो देखती घंटों तक सितारों को है ,
नसमझ खुद कीमती चांद है

उसने श्रृंगार के ऊपर संघर्ष रखा
बेशक अपने किरदार से चमकती है

वो हजूम में भी महज एक कतरा है वो अपने लिए अपने आप से भी लड़ती है

उसने तोड़ दी सारी बेड़ियाँ

जब जाना प्राथमिकता पाबंदी से बड़ी है

मैंने देखा है उसे अपने से कहते संभाल लूंगी मैं खुद को संघर्ष अभी बाकी है

वो आसमा की हकदार है नसीब, चढ़ावा क्या चीज़ है

मैंने देखा है उसे वो खुद को चढ़ा बैठी है

CORRECTION

आई

Maithilee Reddy

आई नसती तर हे जग इतके सुंदर कसे असते
तिच आहे जिच्यावाचून आपले जगणे सुरू
पण होत नसते

आई आहे प्रेम ज्यानी आयुष्य अनमोल बनते
असून नसून जे आपले असते ते म्हणजेच
आई असते.

आई असते ओंजळ ज्यात पाणी बनून जगण सोपे
होते
समज नसते कसलीच जेव्हा तिची साथ आपल्याला
आपली ओळख देते

बनून काठी सावली जेव्हा काही दुःख करायचे
तिच आपल्या हातून मार्ग दाखवून अलगद
बाहेर काढते
सोपे नाही काहीच पण तिच्या मुळे सगळं सहज
बनते
आईच असते जी ही छान जवळ थीर बनून
असते

ना शंका ना भीती ना संकट पुढे देत
जागी असते पिलासाठी सतत कळवळ असते
किती पण परीक्षा घेत
आई असते जी चूक झाली तर कान पकडून
थीर देते
एक वाट नाही म्हणून स्वप्नी असो वा
जागी कुठेतरी असते

खोटे नाही हे खरे आहे प्रत्येक गोष्टीत ते
घडते



म्हणूनच मी मानतो अन् हे मनापासून म्हणतो
आई हे देवाचे रूप असते
आई सारखे दुसरे स्वरूप नसते.

CORRECTION

वक़्त की चाल

Bhoomika dixit

वक़्त की चाल बड़ी अजीब होती है,
कभी खुशी, कभी नसीब होती है।
जो आज अपना लगता है बहुत,
कल उसकी बस एक तस्वीर होती है।

कल तक जो सपने आँखों में थे,
आज वो हक़ीक़त बन जाते हैं।
और कुछ हक़ीक़त के अपने पल,
चुपचाप यादों में ढल जाते हैं।

वक़्त न रुकता, न किसी के लिए झुकता,
बस अपनी धुन में आगे बढ़ता है।
कभी गिराकर हमें सबक देता है,
कभी उठाकर हौसला भरता है।

इसलिए बीते कल को रोना नहीं,
आने वाले कल से डरना नहीं।
आज का पल दिल से जी लेना—
क्योंकि वक़्त लौटकर आता नहीं।



जो बदल रहा है, उसे बदलने दो,

जो जा रहा है, उसे जाने दो।

वक्त की किताब का हर पन्ना कहता है—

“ठहरना मत... बस आगे बढ़ते जाना।”

CORRECTION

समय बदलता रहता है

Bhoomika dixit

कल जो अपना था, आज पराया लगता है,
वक्त के संग हर रिश्ता नया सा लगता है।
जो पल कभी थमने का नाम नहीं लेते थे,
आज वही पल बस यादों में मिलते हैं।

मौसम बदलते हैं, रास्ते बदल जाते हैं,
कुछ लोग पास आकर फिर दूर हो जाते हैं।
कल की हँसी आज आँखों में ठहर जाती है,
ज़िंदगी हर मोड़ पर कुछ सिखाती है।

न कोई समय हमेशा एक जैसा रहता है,
न कोई दुख सदा दिल में रहता है।
आज अगर रात है तो कल सवेरा होगा,
बदला हुआ वक्त फिर हमारा होगा।

इसलिए जो मिला, उसे मुस्कुराकर जी लो,
जो चला गया, उसे यादों में रख लो।
क्योंकि समय का बस यही फ़साना है—
बदलना ही उसका पुराना बहाना है।



वो प्यार जो घर जैसा लगे

Yashika

शायद प्यार तब होता है जब कोई इंसान धीरे-धीरे हमारी रोज़मर्रा की ज़िंदगी का हिस्सा बन जाता है। हम उससे जुड़ने लगते हैं, उसके मैसेज का इंतज़ार करते हैं, उसकी कही हुई छोटी-छोटी बातें याद रखते हैं और बिना किसी वजह के भी उसके बारे में सोचते रहते हैं।

प्यार किसी perfect इंसान को ढूँढने का नाम नहीं है। प्यार तो उस इंसान के साथ अपनी feelings के ज़रिए एक खूबसूरत एहसास बनाने का नाम है। इसमें लड़ाइयाँ होती हैं, गलतफहमियाँ होती हैं और कभी-कभी एक-दूसरे को समझना भी मुश्किल हो जाता है। लेकिन फिर भी छोड़कर जाने का मन नहीं करता—बस चीज़ों को ठीक करने का मन करता है। क्योंकि प्यार सिर्फ़ अच्छे दिनों में साथ रहने का नाम नहीं है। प्यार तब भी साथ रहने का नाम है जब चीज़ें आसान न हों।

कभी प्यार बस इतना होता है—“खाना खाया?” या “तुम ठीक हो?”

कभी बस इतना—“मैं हमेशा तुम्हारे साथ हूँ।”

और कभी बिना कुछ कहे बस साथ रहना ही काफी होता है। और शायद प्यार का सबसे खूबसूरत एहसास तब होता है जब कोई इंसान सिर्फ़ हमारी ज़िंदगी का हिस्सा नहीं रहता... बल्कि उसके साथ होने से दिल को घर जैसा महसूस होने लगता है। ♥



वादा

I'm a lad of 16 years . I appreciate the great decision of "The Favourite Tells Publishers" . A lot of thanks for giving a chance to connecting with respected readers through this great book & I think it's also helpful for readers & for us to connect with so many languages. I wish may you all live long by the grace of God.

प्रत्यूष पाल

मैने जमाने मे खुदको बदनाम कर दिया।
मैने खुदको नाकाम ऐलान कर दिया ।
मेरे सारे ईनाम तुम्हारे नाम कर दिया ॥

ख्वाब मैं उसको ना लाने का इरादा कर रहा था।
उसी पल मैंने पलके झपाक लिया।
उसी सुबह कुदरत ने कहा कि -

"तू दुनिया भूल गया।।"
हा मैं उसका चेहरा भूल गया ।
अंजाम तो उसके पहले ही मिल गया।

मेरा दिल धड़कना भूल गया ॥



बेवफ़ाई!

Anshika Sarkar

वो जो कहते थे के हम एक हैं,
आज फ़ासलों का हुनर दिखा गए।

वफ़ा के नाम पर शुरू हुई थी जो कहानी,
उसे बेवफ़ाई का मोड़ सिखा गए।

मैंने तो अपनी पलकों पर सजाया था
उनके हर एक ख़्वाब को।

मगर वो उन्हीं ख़्वाबों की बस्ती में,
किसी और का घर बसा गए।

यकीन की दीवारें इतनी कच्ची होंगी,
ये कभी सोचा न था हमने।

वो तो सरे-बाज़ार मेरे भरोसे का,
तमाशा सरेआम लगा गए।

अब सँभलने की कोशिश है,



मगर ज़ख्म इतने गहरे हैं।

कि वो जाते-जाते मेरी रूह को भी,

गहरी तन्हाई में सुला गए।

CORRECTION

गाँव की शाम और तिरंगा

Harsh Taneja is a creator, poet, and artisan whose life and work bridges the worlds of sensory expression and philosophical reflection. He always write that topic that touches the soul and heart of the readers

Harsh Taneja

मेरा गाँव की शाम की छाँव,
मानो सुकून से नदी में पाँव।
ठंडी हवा जब पत्ती हिलाए,
सारा दर्द मानो आराम दे जाए।
खेत-खलिहान और मिट्टी की खुशबू,
भाई-बहन की वो शरारत की बात,
दिल के एक कोने में आज भी है याद।
यारों की एक अपनी टोली,
झूला, मेला और रंगों की होली!
हाथों की चूड़ियाँ, पैरों की पायल जब आवाज़ लगाती है,
सावन सी बरसात, मेरी प्रिय की आँखों से भी आती है।
याद मुझे बहुत आती है,
माँ की फिकर भी सताती है।

पापा का सपना मेरा ही हिस्सा आया है,
देश की रक्षा को मैंने अपना फर्ज बनाया है।
कभी-कभी घर न लौट आना की चिंता भी सताती है,
फिर याद मातृभूमि की भी आती है...
जिसकी गोद में पला-बढ़ा,
एक दिन मिल उसी में जाना है।
तिरंगे में लिपटा जब यह बदन आएगा,
मेरा गाँव, मेरी शाम मुझे फिर से बुलाएगा।
ना रोना मेरे जाने पर ऐ मेरे दोस्तों,
यह मिट्टी का फर्ज था, जो मैंने चुकाया है।
अपने गाँव की मिट्टी को अपने देश की मिट्टी से मिलाया है...

एक दरख्त और वो नन्हीं चिड़िया

Akansha Shrivastava

वह एक अज़ीम दरख्त था,
जो सदियों से खड़ा था,
मेरी छोटी सी दुनिया का,
वो सबसे बड़ा आसमाँ था।

जब भी तेज़ हवाएँ या तपती धूप मुझे डराती,
उसकी घनी टहनियों का साया,
मुझे बाहों में छुपाता। मैं एक नन्हीं सी चिड़िया,
उसी की शाख पर चहकती थी,
उसकी मज़बूत जड़ों के भरोसे,
मैं बेफ़िक्र उड़ती थी। सोचा था



एक दिन उस ऊँचे आसमान को छूकर लौटूँगी,
और अपनी हर उड़ान की कहानी,
उसी पुराने पेड़ को सुनाऊँगी।

पर एक रोज़ खामोशी से वो दरख्त कहीं खो गया,
वो साया जो मेरा घर था,
वो खुद एक गुज़रा कल हो गया।

अब खाली है वो शाख,
जहाँ बैठकर मैंने चहकना सीखा था,
जिसके पत्तों की सरसराहट में,
मैंने ज़िन्दगी का फलसफा सीखा था।

अब आसमान बहुत बड़ा है,
पर उड़ने का वो चाव नहीं रहा,
क्योंकि थक कर जहाँ लौटती थी,
अब वो छाँव नहीं रहा।

पर उसकी दी हुई हिम्मत से ही,
आज ये पंख फड़फड़ाते हैं,
पेड़ भले ना रहा,
पर उसकी नहीं चिड़िया में आज भी उसी के हौसले मुस्कुराते हैं।

प्रकृति

मैंने 10वीं कक्षा से लिखना प्रारंभ किया मेरे लिखने के प्रेरणा की शुरुआत मेरे गांव से हुई मेरा प्रयास रहता की मैं अपनी कविताओं के जरिये आप सभी को एक आनंद प्रदान करू तथा कविताओं को चंद अक्षर नहीं एक अहसास का रूप दु

Rakhi Valmiki

श्रवण जो एक शहर में अपनी पत्नी के साथ रहता था श्रवण एक पढ़ा लिखा होशियार व्यक्ति था वो एक बैंक मैनेजर था श्रवण बचपन में अपने माता पिता के साथ एक गांव में रहता था जब वो 13 वर्ष का था तभी उसके माता पिता का निधन हो गया था तब श्रवण अपने रिश्तेदार के साथ शहर में रहने लगा था। श्रवण को गांव बहुत पसंद था आज भी वो उन सबको बहुत याद करता था श्रवण बहुत कामयाब था अच्छी नौकरी थी किसी चीज की कमी नहीं थी फिर भी उसे गांव छोड़ने का दुख होता था। एक दिन वह अपने गांव को याद कर रहा था वो खेत, हरियाली, हरे भरे पेड़ पौधे और वो श्रवण मास की बारिश सब याद आता है सालों से छूटे उस गांव से लगाव को वो आज भी कम नहीं कर पाया तो उसके मन में अचानक एक सवाल आता है कि " ऐसे बहुत से लोग हैं जिन्हें प्रकृति से लगाव हो जाता है क्या कोई ऐसा भी जिससे प्रकृति को भी लगाव हुआ हो" श्रवण सोचता रहता है क्या कोई ऐसा भी होता है। फिर अचानक से एक दिन एक एक्सीडेंट में उसकी पत्नी की मृत्यु हो जाती है श्रवण को एक पल के लिए लगा जैसे उसकी दुनिया खत्म हो गई हो बहुत दिन बीत जाते हैं श्रवण फिर भी दुखी रहता है एक दिन श्रवण ने गांव जाने का फैसला किया क्योंकि उसकी पत्नी के जाने के बाद उस शहर में अच्छा नहीं लग रहा था। श्रवण गांव पहुँचा उसे हरे भरे खेत देखकर उसमें अपने बचपन की झलक देखकर उसे अच्छा महसूस हुआ। फिर उसने देखा इतनी कड़ी धूप में इतनी मेहनत के बाद किसान इतने थके हुए हैं फिर भी उन्हें अपना जीवन कष्टप्रद नहीं लगता है और न ही कोई चिंता है एक किसान से पूछा भी किसान पहले मुस्कुराया फिर बोला बेटा "जब हम कुछ



लगाव से करते है तो वो अवश्य ही हमारे परिश्रम का कारण बनता है पर फिर वही हमारे सुकून का भी कारण बनता है" पर वो श्रवण ठीक से न समझा सोचन लगा फिर भी खेतो का अपार परिश्रम किसी को कैसे सुख दे सकता है फिर श्रवण ने पूछा चाचा क्या मै इसे अनुभव करने के लिए कुछ दिन आपके साथ रुक सकता हू फिर श्रवण ने अपना परिचय दिया की वह उसी गांव का है और वह ऐसे उनके साथ रहने लगा अब फसल बोने का समय आया सबसे पहले बुआई जूताई सबमे श्रवण चाचा के साथ रहा अब श्रवण को भी खेत से रुचि हो रही थी खेत की नमी और हरियाली से गुजरती वो हवा अब श्रवण को भी आनंद अनुभव कराने लगी थी जब एक दिन खेत की हरी भरी फसल उसने देखी तो इतना उसे सुकूँ हुआ कि पहले जो परिश्रम लगा था वो उसके दिमाग मे कहीं भी नहीं रहा अब श्रवण को समझ आया की किसानो का जीवन कष्टप्रद होने के बाद भी सुखदायी क्यु है क्युकी एक किसान सदैव अपने खेत से प्रकृति से निस्वार्थ भाव से ही जुड़ता है वो कभी भी यहा पर लाभ के लिए नहीं सोचता सदैव उसे पूजनीय मानकर उसे अच्छा से अच्छा परिश्रम देने का प्रयास करता है सभी कहते है कि निस्वार्थ भाव से किया गया कार्य सदैव फलदायी होता है यहाँ फल का भाव अर्थ से नहीं एक किसान की लहराती फसल से है जो उसके लिए किसी खजाने से कम नहीं। और श्रवण के मन मे आये उस प्रश्न का भी जवाब मिल जाता है "कि जब हम अच्छे भाव के साथ कुछ विशेष अपने मित्र की तरह प्रकृति मे लगाव रखने का प्रयास करते है तो धीरे धीरे प्रकृति को भी उस व्यक्ति से लगाव हो जाता है अंततः प्रकृति भी उसे विशेष देती है हां ये सच है कि कुछ लोग ऐसे भी है जिसे न सिर्फ प्रकृति से प्रकृति को भी उससे लगाव हो जाता है"

Feelings of Separation from Mother and love

Shlok Raj

When a child is far away from Mom

रोज़ तेरे चेहरे से आँखें खुलती हैं,
मिलने की बेचैनी ऐसी... रोज़ तूफान सी बढ़ती है

धड़कन मुझसे हर पल सवाल करती है,
माँ तू मेरे पास क्यों नहीं बसती है

लाचार तू... बेबसी मेरी भी कहाँ चलती है
तेरा बिना अब तो सासे भी, हर कदम ठहर-ठहर सी चलती है

कुछ बनने की चाह से रोज़ सुबह आँख खुलती है... इस दर्द में सब मिलते हैं पर तेरी
कमी ही खलती है

कुछ बन भी गया तो ये समय कैसे लाऊंगा...

2 साल तेरे हाथ की थाप के बिना ना जाने कैसे जी पाऊंगा

मैंने देखे तेरे आंसू... आँखें मेरी भी खुद से लड़ती है

तुम्हें रोज़ देख कर... समंदर बहाऊ बस ये एक ज़िक्र करती है



रो लेता हूँ अकेले जब तेरी याद आती है....किसी ने सच कहा मां की कीमत अक्सर
अकेले में समझ आती है

तू जी हजारो साल बस यही कह पाऊंगा
मां रोना ना..नहीं तो अब मैं बेह जाऊंगा

When a person whom you love and admire like a God Started neglecting
and want to cut off their connection.

उस खता का जवाब दो, जो की थी मैंने,
इस भक्ति का हिसाब दो, जो जपी थी मैंने।
इस मूर्ति को क्यों तोड़ा, जो रची थी मैंने,
पुकार सुनकर भी अनसुनी की, जो लगाई थी मैंने।

सामने आए तो पूजा की मैंने,
पीछे भी तेरी ही बस दुआ की मैंने।
अपनी हार-जीत, तेरे नाम की मैंने,
तेरी सलामती और तरक्की की उससे रज़ा ली मैंने।
खुदाया... अब तू ही बता दे मुझे, क्या ग़लत आदमी से वफ़ा की मैंने?

काश - खैर

Disha Prashant Rao is a writer, poet, singer and performer from *Belagavi, Karnataka*, who writes to spread love and share the thoughts closest to her heart. Writing has always been her quiet joy — a way of turning feeling into words, and words into connection.

Disha Prashant Rao

लाख कोशिशें कीं, कि किसी तरह गुज़ारा हो जाए
तुम्हें यादों में बिखरा देख, दिल यूँ न उलझ जाए।

काश मुमकिन हो हमारा मिलना किसी मोड़ पे!
दुआ है रब से कि उसी पल हम तेरे हो जाएँ...

ये दुनिया वाले कितना भी ज़ोर लगा ले, हमें अलग करने का
वादा है — आपकी इजाज़त के बिना हम कहीं न जाएँ।
वहीं बैठे रहेंगे, इंतज़ार करेंगे आपके इशारे का,
चाहे मेरे शरीर से ये आत्मा चली जाए।

आप कहते हो कि, कोई खयाल रखने वाला चाहिए
आपके साथ, नदी के किनारे चलने वाला चाहिए।
हमें यूँ लालच में न बाँधे —
शिकायतें हज़ारों हैं, बस चाहने वाला चाहिए।

माना कि रास्ते मुश्किल हैं, मंज़िल भी दूर सही
पर दिल ने तो ठान लिया है, अब पीछे मुड़ना मंज़ूर नहीं।
हर मोड़ पे खड़े रहेंगे, चाहे वक्त कितना भी गुज़र जाए
बस एक बार मुड़के देख लो, दिल का हर ग़म उतर जाए।

खैर, छोड़ो, दिल की बातें — दिल में ही ठीक है
चाहत कितनी भी हसीन हो, नसीब सी नहीं है।
बस इंतज़ार ही इंतज़ार को काटेगा शायद...
बस में मेरे भी कुछ नहीं है।



बेवफ़ाई

Anshika Sarkar

वो जो कहते थे के हम एक हैं,
आज फ़ासलों का हुनर दिखा गए।

वफ़ा के नाम पर शुरू हुई थी जो कहानी,
उसे बेवफ़ाई का मोड़ सिखा गए।

मैंने तो अपनी पलकों पर सजाया था
उनके हर एक ख़्वाब को।

मगर वो उन्हीं ख़्वाबों की बस्ती में,
किसी और का घर बसा गए।

यकीन की दीवारें इतनी कच्ची होंगी,
ये कभी सोचा न था हमने।
वो तो सरे-बाज़ार मेरे भरोसे का,
तमाशा सरेआम लगा गए।

अब सँभलने की कोशिश है,
मगर ज़ख़्म इतने गहरे हैं।

कि वो जाते-जाते मेरी रूह को भी,
गहरी तन्हाई में सुला गए।

CORRECTION

काबिलियत

आशीष श्योराण, मैकेनिकल इंजीनियर, लघु फिल्म निर्देशक, हास्य वक्ता उसके बाद साहित्य में गहरी रुचि के चलते ओशो, जॉन एलिया, अहमद फ़राज़ से रूबरू होकर जीवन का गहन अध्ययन किया और लिखना शुरू किया। वर्तमान में जलदीप स्कूल के डायरेक्टर के पद पर कार्यरत हैं खुद के स्कूल में भी बच्चों की कला के प्रति रुचि जगा रहे हैं और सामाजिक जीवन को गहरी समझ के साथ शब्दों का रूप दे रहे हैं।

Ashish Sheoran

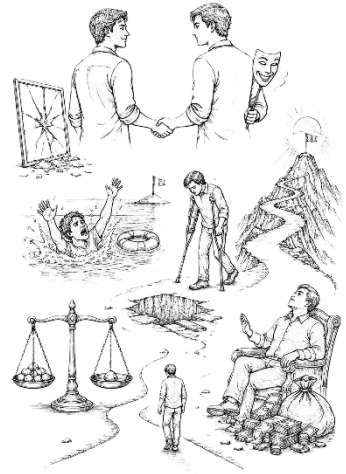
आँखें धुंधला जाएँ तो, ज़मीन पर भी बादल नज़र आते हैं,
नज़रिया बदला है जब से, मुझे हारे भी काबिल नज़र आते हैं।
हालातों से लड़े हुए, दिल के साफ़ और सच्चे,
यही सीधे-सादे लोग दुनिया को पागल नज़र आते हैं।
जो पानी तक नहीं पूछते, वो पढ़े-लिखे कहलाते हैं,
जो दूध-सब्ज़ी से झोली भर देते हैं, वो ज़ाहिल नज़र आते हैं।
झूठी मुस्कान के साथ, जिनके पाँव छूने पड़ते हैं,
समाज के वो पहरेदार, मेरे सपनों के कातिल नज़र आते हैं।

दुबारा नहीं चलता

आशीष श्योराण, मैकेनिकल इंजीनियर, लघु फिल्म निर्देशक, हास्य वक्ता उसके बाद साहित्य में गहरी रुचि के चलते ओशो, जॉन एलिया, अहमद फ़राज़ से रूबरू होकर जीवन का गहन अध्ययन किया और लिखना शुरू किया। वर्तमान में जलदीप स्कूल के डायरेक्टर के पद पर कार्यरत हैं खुद के स्कूल में भी बच्चों की कला के प्रति रुचि जगा रहे हैं और सामाजिक जीवन को गहरी समझ के साथ शब्दों का रूप दे रहे हैं।

Ashish Sheoran

माना के आपका झूठ के बगैर गुजारा नहीं चलता,
मगर एक बार चल गया वो झूठ दुबारा नहीं चलता,
बोल दिया भाई तो फ़र्ज़ निभाना भी सीखो,
यूं सिर्फ़ मतलब से भाईचारा नहीं चलता,
किसी किसी को डूबकर ही मिलती है मंजिल,
सबकी किस्मत में किनारा नहीं चलता ,
नीयत में ही खोट हो तो गिरना तय है फिर,
बदनीयत को बैसाखियों का सहारा नहीं चलता,
कर्म जैसे किए है वैसा भोगना ही पड़ेगा,
ऊपर वाले की बही में मीठा - खारा नहीं चलता,
ये किस तरह से रिश्ता निभाया जा रहा है,
दौलत हमारी चलती है, हक हमारा नहीं
चलता ।



OTHER

ମାଟି କଣ୍ଢେଇ

Subha Kalyan Das is an emerging writer and poet with a deep passion for literature, storytelling and creative expression. His writings reflect a sensitive understanding of human emotions, social realities and the experiences that shape everyday life.

Subha Kalayan Das

ଚିତ୍ତି ପରଦାରେ ରକ୍ତବର୍ଣ୍ଣର ସେଇ ଅକ୍ଷରଗୁଡ଼ିକ କ୍ରମାଗତ ଭାବେ ଚେତାଇ
ଦେଉଥିଲେ ଆସୁଛି ମହାପ୍ରଳୟ, ସାବଧାନ! ବାହାରେ ଆକାଶଟା ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଅଭିଶାପ ପରି
କୃଷ୍ଣବର୍ଣ୍ଣର ଆବରଣ ପିନ୍ଧି ମାଡ଼ି ଆସୁଥିଲା, ସତେ ଯେମିତି କ୍ଷୁଧିତ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ସମଗ୍ର ସୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ
ନିଜ ଗହ୍ୱରରେ ଲୀନ କରିଦେବାକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେଉଛି। କିନ୍ତୁ ଘନ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଝଡ଼ର
ବୀଭତ୍ସତା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଘର ଭିତରର ଶ୍ୱଶାନବତ୍ ନିସ୍ତର୍କାତା ଅଧିକ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଥିଲା। ସେଇ
ନିରବତାକୁ ବିଦାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରି ହଠାତ୍ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍‌ର 'ରିଙ୍ଗ୍ ରିଙ୍ଗ୍' ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଘରଟାକୁ ଥରାଇ
ଦେଲା।

ସେ ଅତୀତର ସେଇ ଧୂଳିଧୂସରିତ ଗଳିରେ ପୁଣିଥରେ ହଜିଗଲେ... ସେଇ ପୁରୁଣା
ପରୋପକାରୀ ଘନ ମଉସା, ଯାହାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ପରିବାର କହିଲେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ରାଧା, ପ୍ରାଣପ୍ରିୟା ଝିଅ
ପୂଜା ଆଉ ଦୁଇଟି ନିଷ୍ଠାପ ଅବୋଲା ଜୀବ ଜଗା ଓ ବଳିଆ। ସାତ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଶନିବାର
ଗୋରୁ ହାତରୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କିଣି ଆଣିଥିଲେ। ସେବେଠାରୁ ସେମାନେ ଘନ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟର
ସ୍ୱୟମ୍ଭୁ ନିଜର କରି ନେଇଥିଲେ। କାଦୁଅ ସରସର ବିଲରେ କାନ୍ଧରେ କାନ୍ଧ ମିଳାଇ ହଳ
କରିବାଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଘରର ପ୍ରତିଟି ଦୁଃଖସୁଖରେ ସେମାନେ ଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଶ୍ରମିକ
ଜୀବନର ଅଲିଖିତ କବିତା।

ସଞ୍ଜ ନଇଁଲେ ଗାଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗଉରା ଚା' ଦୋକାନର ପିଣ୍ଡାଟା ପାଲଟିଯାଏ ଶହ ଶହ ଚରିତ୍ରଙ୍କ
ମିଳନ ସ୍ଥଳ, ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଗାଁର ଏକ 'ଜୀବନ୍ତ ସମାଚାର ଦର୍ପଣ'। ରମା ଜେଜେ, ହରି ଦାଦା
ଆଉ ଶିବ କକାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଅଭିଜ୍ଞ ଚରିତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କର ସେଠି ଆସର ଜମେ। ମାତ୍ର ସେଦିନ ଘନ
ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ତ୍ରର ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନିକ ଆକାଶର ପରିଧିକୁ ଛୁଇଁଥିଲା। ଝିଅ ପୂଜା ଆଜି ମାତ୍ରିକ
ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ଭଜ ନମ୍ବର ରଖି ପାସ୍ କରିଛି। ଗାଁର ଅନ୍ୟ ଝିଅମାନେ ବାଲିଘର କିମ୍ବା

ବାହାଘର ଖେଳରେ ମାଡୁଥିବା ବେଳେ, ପୂଜା ବାଲି ଉପରେ କିମ୍ବା ଚିରା କାଗଜରେ ସ୍ଥୂଳର ଚିତ୍ର ଆଙ୍କୁଥିଲା।

ଝିଅର ସେଇ ସ୍ବପ୍ନକୁ ଦେଖି ଘନ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଛାତି ଭିତରେ ଏକ ଭୀଷ୍ ସଂକଳ୍ପ ଜନ୍ମ ନେଇଥିଲା "ମୋ ଝିଅ ଯେତେ ପଢ଼ିବ, ମୁଁ ତାକୁ ପଢ଼ାଇବି।" ସାହୁକାରର ଲାଲ୍ ଖାତାରେ କରକର ସୁଧମୂଳର ଜଟିଳ ଗଣିତ ହୁଏତ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା ନଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ଝିଅର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିନେ ଏହି ଅନ୍ଧାରୀ ଗାଁର ସାହାରା ପାଲଟିବ ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କ ବିଶ୍ବାସ ଅଟଳ ଥିଲା। ସେ ବାଡ଼ିରୁ କଅଁଳ ସବୁଜ ଘାସ କାଟି ଆଣି ଜଗା-ବଳିଆଙ୍କୁ ଘୋଳ ଚୋରାଣି ପିଆଇ ଝିଅର ସଫଳତାର ଭୋଜିରେ ଆପ୍ୟାୟିତ କରିଥିଲେ। ପୂଜାର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଫଳ କେବଳ ମାର୍କସିଭର କେଇଟା ସଂଖ୍ୟା ନଥିଲା, ସେଥିରେ ଲେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା ଘନ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷର ପରିଶ୍ରମର ନୀରବ ଅଶ୍ରୁର ଶ୍ଳୋକ।

ଗଉରା ତା' ଦୋକାନରେ ନିଜ ଗାମୁଛା କାନିରୁ ଜାକି ରଖୁଥିବା ପତାଣ ଚଳିଆ ନୋଟ୍ ବଢ଼ାଇ ସେ କହିଥିଲେ, "ଗଉରା, ଆଜି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ତା ପିଆ, ମୋ ଝିଅ ପାଢ଼ କରିଛି... ଆଜିର ଏ ମିଠା ତା ଖାଲି ମୋ ଝିଅ ପାଇଁ।" ସେଦିନ ତା'ର ପ୍ରତିଟି ଢୋକରେ ଚିନିର ମିଠା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଜଣେ ବାପାର ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ପୂରଣ ହେବାର ସ୍ବାଦ ଅଧିକ ରହିଥିଲା।

ରତ୍ନଚକ୍ରର ଆବର୍ତ୍ତନରେ ରଜ ଆସିଲେ ଗାଁ ମାଟି ପୁଣିଥରେ ଯୌବନପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହୋଇ ହସିଉଠେ। ପୂଜା ବି ସହରର କଂକ୍ରିଟ୍ ପଞ୍ଜୁରୀରୁ ମୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଗାଁ ମାଟିରେ ପାଦ ଦେଇଥିଲା। ତା' ଆଖିରେ ଆଜି କେବଳ ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ନୁହେଁ, ସଫଳତାର ସ୍ବର୍ଣ୍ଣମ ସମୁଦ୍ର ଲହଡ଼ି ଭାଙ୍ଗୁଥିଲା। ସେ କେବଳ ସ୍ନାତକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ସାରିନଥିଲା, ବରଂ ନିଜ ହାତରେ ଧରିଥିଲା ଏକ ନୂତନ ଚାକିରିର ପରିଚୟ ପତ୍ର, ଯାହା ଥିଲା ତାର ସ୍ବାଭିମାନର ଶିକାଲେଖ।

ଦୂରରୁ ଝିଅକୁ ଆସୁଥିବାର ଦେଖି ଘନ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ପିତୃହୃଦୟ ଭାବବିହ୍ବଳତାରେ ଜଳଜଳ ହୋଇ ଉଠୁଥିଲା। ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ନିଜ ରକ୍ତକୁ ପାଣି କରି ସିଞ୍ଚନ କରିଥିବା ସ୍ବପ୍ନର କଅଁଳ ଚାରାଟି ଆଜି ଏକ ତେଜସ୍ବୀ ମହୀରୁହରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଥିଲା। ଝିଅର ଏହି ସଫଳତା ସାହୁକାରର ଲାଲ୍ ଖାତାର କରଜ ଏବଂ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ଚିନ୍ତାରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ଦେଇଥିଲା। ଗାଁର ମାଟି ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ପୂଜାର ପ୍ରତିଟି ପାଦଶବ୍ଦ ଯେମିତି ଶୁଣାଉଥିଲା "ବାପା, ତୁମର ଶ୍ରମକ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଜୀବନର ଅନ୍ତ ଘଟିଛି, ଏବେ ତୁମର ବିଶ୍ରାମର ସମୟ ଆସିଛି।"

ସେଇ ରଜ ପର୍ବରେ ଟାଁକୁ ଆସିଥିଲା ରୁନି ମାଉସୀ। ପୂଜାକୁ ଦେଖୁ ସେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲା
,ଲାବଣ୍ୟଭରା ମୁଖମଣ୍ଡଳ, ଚପଳ ଦୁଇଟି ଆଖି, ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କାରର ଅପୂର୍ବ ସମନ୍ୱୟ।
ସେ ଘନ ମଉସାକୁ କହିଲା, "ଭାଇ, ପୂଜା ପାଇଁ ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନିକ ରାଜପ୍ରାସାଦର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଅଛି।
ଆମ ସହରର ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ ସାମଲ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଘର, ଅଚଳାଚଳ ବୈଜବ, ପୁଅ ସଫ୍ଟୱେୟାର
ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର; ଆମ ପୂଜା ସେଠି ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ଞୀ ପରି ରହିବ।"

ଏହି ଅପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶିତ ସମ୍ଭାବନାର କଥା ଶୁଣି ପୂଜାର ସ୍ୱୟନରେ ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଶିହରଣ
ଖେଳିଗଲା। କିନ୍ତୁ ସେହି ସମସ୍ତ କଳ୍ପନାର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ ତା' ପାଇଁ ସବୁଠୁ ବଡ଼ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଥିଲା ତା'
ବାପାଙ୍କ ଓଠର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତ ହସଟି। ସାମଲ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଅକାଳ ବିୟୋଗ ପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସଂସାରର
ମଙ୍ଗ ଧରିଥିଲେ ବଡ଼ବୋହୂ ନିବେଦିତା। ଶାଶୁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଆଉ ପୁଅ ପରି ପାଳିଥିବା ଦିଅର
ରାଜୁକୁ ନେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଦୁନିଆ। ବାହ୍ୟ ଚିକ୍ଷଣତାକୁ ଦେଖି ଘନ ମଉସା ବିଚାରିଲେ, ହୁଏତ ଝିଅ
ପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟର ଆଶ୍ରୟ ଆଉ କେବେ ମିଳିବନି। ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱର ସ୍ୱତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଧରାଗଲା, ଦିନକ୍ଷଣ
ସ୍ଥିର ହେଲା।

ପୂଜାର ରୂପ, ସଂସ୍କାର ଏବଂ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଖି ରାଜୁ ଓ ତା'ର ପରିବାର ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହେବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ
ଥିଲା। ମାତ୍ର ସବୁକିଛି ମଧୁର ସମାପ୍ତି ଆଡ଼କୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ବେଳେ ନିବେଦିତା ଘନ ମଉସାଙ୍କ
କାନରେ ସେଇ ବିଷାକ୍ତ ସର୍ତ୍ତ ଢାଳିଦେଲେ "ମଉସା! ଆମର କିଛି ଅଭିଳାଷ ନାହିଁ, ଖାଲି
ଜୋର୍‌ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଅତ୍ୟାଧୁନିକ ଚାରିଚକିଆ ଯାନ ଆଉ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସାମଗ୍ରୀ ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ
ଅନୁସାରେ ଦେବେ। ଗାଡ଼ିର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଦେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବନି, ବାକି ଟଙ୍କା ତ ପୂଜା ନିଜେ
ରୋଜଗାର କରୁଛି, ସେ ମାସିକ କିସ୍ତିରେ ସୁଝିଦେବ।"

ଏଇ କଥା ଶୁଣିବା କ୍ଷଣି ଘନ ମଉସାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା, ସତେ ଯେମିତି କେହି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଦତଳୁ
ପୃଥ୍ବୀର ସବୁ ମାଟି ଖସାଇ ନେଲା। ପୂଜା ରୋକଠୋକ୍ ମନା କଲା "ବାପା, ମୁଁ ବାହା
ହେବିନି, ମୁଁ ତୁମ ପାଖରେ ରହିବି।" କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ବୁଝିପାରୁଥିଲା, ତାର ବାପା ଶେଷ ସମ୍ବଳ 'ଦୁଇ
ମାଣ ଜମି'କୁ ବିକ୍ରି କରିବାକୁ ମନେ ମନେ ସ୍ଥିର କରିସାରିଛନ୍ତି।

ଘନ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଇ ମାଣ ଜମି ଆଉ ପୂଜା ଏଇ ଦୁଇଟି ହିଁ ତ ଜୀବନର ସଞ୍ଚିତ
ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି। ମନ ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠୁଥିଲା, ଜମି ଗଲେ ଜଗା-ବଳିଆଙ୍କ ଦାନା କୁଆଡ଼େ ଯିବ? ଆଉ
ପୂଜା ନ ଗଲେ ଏଇ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ସଂସାରରେ ସେ କେମିତି ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେବେ? ଶେଷରେ ପିତୃତ୍ୱର

ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ଆଗରେ ହାର ମାନି, ପୂଜାକୁ ନିଜର ରାଣ ଦେଇ ବାହାଘର ପାଇଁ ରାଜି କରାଇଲେ।
ନିଜ କ୍ଷତବିକ୍ଷତ ମନକୁ କେବଳ ଏତିକି କହି ବୁଝାଉଥିଲେ "ବଡ଼ ଘରର ବୋହୂ
ହୋଇଯାଉଛି, ମୋ ଝିଅ ରାଣୀ ପରି ରହିବ।"

ମାତ୍ର ସେହି ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ଆଲୋକମାଳା ଏବଂ ମାଙ୍ଗଳିକ ବାଦ୍ୟର ଅନ୍ଧରାଳରେ ଯେ ଏକ
କାଳିମାମୟ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଗୁଞ୍ଜରିତ ହେଉଥିଲା, ତାହା ପୂଜା କେବେ ସ୍ବପ୍ନରେ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଭାବି ନଥିଲା।
ବାସର ରାତିର ସେଇ ନିଶ୍ବ ନିଶୀଥରେ ପୂଜାର ଶରୀର ଜ୍ବରର ପ୍ରଖର ଉତ୍ସ୍ବତାରେ ସେକି
ହେଉଥିଲା, କାନ୍ତିରେ ତାର ଆଖିପତା ବୁଜି ହୋଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା। କିନ୍ତୁ ହଠାତ୍ କବାଟ ଖୋଲିବାର
ଏକ କର୍କଶ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ତାର ଚେତନା ଫେରିଆସିଲା। ସେ ଦେଖିଲା ତା' ସାମ୍ନାରେ
ରାଜୁ ଜଣେ ଜୀବନସାଥୀ ନୁହେଁ, ବରଂ ଏକ କ୍ଷୁଧିତ ଓ କାମନାସଜ୍ଜ 'କାଳସର୍ପ' ପରି ମାଡ଼ି
ଆସୁଥିଲା। ପୂଜାର ଅସୁସ୍ଥତା, ତାର ଆକୃତ ନିବେଦନ କିମ୍ବା ଶାନ୍ତୀନତାର ସେଠି କୌଣସି
ମୂଲ୍ୟ ନଥିଲା। ସେଇ ବିଷଧର ବାରମ୍ବାର ଦଂଶନରେ ପୂଜା ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଏକ ଜୀବନ୍ତ
ପାଷାଣ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ପାଲଟି ଯାଉଥିଲା, ପୁରୁଷତ୍ବର ଉନ୍ନାଦନାରେ ଅନ୍ଧ ରାଜୁ ପାଶବିକ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର
ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ନିଜର ଆଧିପତ୍ୟ କାହିଁ କରୁଥିଲା। ପୂଜାର ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ମନ କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର
ଉତ୍ତର ଖୋଜୁଥିଲା ଏଇ ଦୁନିଆଟା କ'ଣ କେବଳ କାଳସର୍ପଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ? ଜଣେ ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ନାରୀର
ସ୍ବାଭିମାନ କ'ଣ ଏତେ ଶସ୍ତା?

ପରଦିନ ସକାଳର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଦୟ ପୂଜା ପାଇଁ କୌଣସି ନୂତନ ସମ୍ବାବନାର ଆଲୋକ ଆଶିଳାନି
ବରଂ ସେଇ କଅଁଳ କିରଣଗୁଡ଼ିକ ତା କ୍ଷତବିକ୍ଷତ ଆତ୍ମା ପାଇଁ ଉପହାସ ସଦୃଶ ମନେ
ହେଉଥିଲା। ଦୂର ଦିଗବଳୟର ଶୂନ୍ୟତାକୁ ଚାହିଁ ସେ ନିଜ ଅର୍ଥହୀନ ଜୀବନର ପରିଧିକୁ
ମାପୁଥିଲା। ଏହି ସନ୍ଧିକ୍ଷଣରେ ନିବେଦିତା ସେଠାରେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କ କଣ୍ଠରେ
ସହାନୁଭୂତି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ସେଇ ପୁରୁଷତାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାର ଶାଣିତ ସ୍ବର ଝଙ୍କିତ ହେଉଥିଲାସେ
ନିଜେ ଜଣେ ନାରୀ ହୋଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ପୂଜାର ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ମାନକୁ ବୁଝିବା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ତାକୁ ହିଁ
ଦୋଷାରୋପର କାଠଗଡ଼ାରେ ଠିଆ କରିଦେଲେ। ଅନ୍ୟପଟେ ଶାଶୁଙ୍କର ଲୋଭଗ୍ରସ୍ତ କଣ୍ଠସ୍ବର
ସାରା ଘରକୁ ବିଷାକ୍ତ କରିଦେଲା— "ଗାଡ଼ି ତ ଆସିଲା, ହେଲେ ନଗଦ ପାଞ୍ଚ ଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା
କାହିଁ? କ'ଣ ଖାଲି ଏଠିକି ରାଣୀ ହୋଇ ବସିବାକୁ ଆସିଛୁ? ସାତପୁରୁଷରୁ ଏମିତି ରାଜଭୋଗ
ଦେଖି ନଥିବୁ, ଏଠିକି ଆସିଛୁ ଆମରି ପୁଅ କମାଣିରେ ନିଶ୍ବାସ ମାରିବାକୁ।"

ଅପମାନର ଏହି ଅସହ୍ୟ ଜ୍ୱାଳା ସହିବା ପୂଜା ପାଇଁ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲା। ସେହି ଘରର ଚାରିକାନ୍ଥ ଭିତରେ ତାର ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ମାନ ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଡିକ ଡିକ ହୋଇ ଜଳୁଥିଲା। ଶେଷରେ ନିବେଦିତା ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ଥିବା ସାମାନ୍ୟ ମାନବିକତାକୁ ସାତୁଣ୍ଡି ଏକ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ମନରେ ପୂଜାକୁ ନେଇ ତା ବାପାଘର ଦୁଆରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ଆସିଲେ। । ପୂଜା ଭାବିଥିଲା, ଯେଉଁ ଜନ୍ମଦାତ୍ରୀର ସ୍ନେହମୟୀ କୋଳରେ ସେ ଶୈଶବରୁ କୈଶୋରକୁ ପାଦ ଥାପିଥିଲା, ଯେଉଁଠି ସେ ମୁକ୍ତ ବିହଙ୍ଗୀ ପରି ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସର ଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଉଥିଲା, ସେଇଠି ହୁଏତ ତାର ଏହି କ୍ଷତବିକ୍ଷତ ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ନ୍ୟାୟର ମଲମ ମିଳିବ। । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଠାରେ ବି ସମାଜର ରକ୍ଷଣଶୀଳତାର ପାଟେରୀ ତା' ବାଟ ଓଗାଳିଲା। ନିଜ ଜଡ଼ିତ ମା' ବି କହିଲେ, "ଝିଅଲୋ, ନିଜ ସଂସାରରେ ଏମିତି ଟିକେ ଅଧି ହୁଏ, ସବୁ ସହି ସମ୍ଭାଳି ରହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ।" ପୂଜା ଶୁଚ୍ଛ ହୋଇଗଲା। ଯେଉଁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ତାକୁ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ଦେଇଥିଲା, ଆଜି ତାହା ପରିବାର ଓ ସମାଜର ପ୍ରତୀତି ବୁଝାମଣା ଭିତରେ ଅଣନିଶ୍ୱାସୀ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲା।

ପୂଜା ପୁଣି ସେଇ ନର୍କକୁ ଫେରିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଲା। ସେ ସତରେ ଏକ ଅସହାୟ 'ମାଟି କଣ୍ଢେଇ' ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଥିଲା। ଗୋଟିଏ ମାଟି ପୁତୁଳା ତିଆରି କଲା ବେଳେ କୁନ୍ସାର ଯେମିତି ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ ପାଇଁ ତାର ଅବୟବକୁ ମୋଡ଼ି ଦିଏ କିମ୍ବା ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦିଏ, ପୂଜାର ଅବସ୍ଥା ଠିକ୍ ସେମିତି ହୋଇଥିଲା। ତାର ମନ କିମ୍ବା ଶରୀରର ସେଠି କୌଣସି ସତ୍ତା ନଥିଲା, ଥିଲା କେବଳ ଏକ ପ୍ରକାଶହୀନ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା। ଏହି ଅନ୍ଧାରୁଆ ଗଳିରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇବାକୁ ସେ ଶେଷରେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଶୀତଳ କୋଳକୁ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରିବାକୁ ଶ୍ରେୟଙ୍କର ମଣିଲା। ତାଙ୍କରଖାନାର ଶେତା ପଡ଼ିଥିବା ବେଢ଼ ଉପରେ ପୂଜା ଯେତେବେଳେ ଜୀବନ ଓ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ସୀମାରେଖାରେ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ କରୁଥିଲା, ସେଠାରେ ବି ରାଜୁର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତା ଶେଷ ହୋଇନଥିଲା। "ତାଙ୍କରବାବୁ, ଏମିତି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଶାରୀରିକ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରଖିଲେ କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ହେବନି ତ?" ତାଙ୍କର ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି କବର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପାଶବିକତା ଦେଖି ଘୃଣାରେ ଶିହରି ଉଠିଲେ। ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଗିଲା, ସତେ ଯେମିତି ସେ ଜଣେ ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଯୁବକ ସହ ନୁହେଁ ବରଂ ଏକ ରକ୍ତମୁଖା ପଶୁ ସହ କଥା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି।

ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଫେରିବା ପରେ ପୂଜା ସେଠାରୁ ଖସି ପଳାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ନିବେଦିତା ତାର ପଥରୋଧ କଲେ। ପୂଜାର ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାକୁ ମାପିବା ପାଇଁ ନିବେଦିତା ଏକ ବ୍ଲେଡ୍ ଆଣି ନିଜ ହାତରେ ଏକ କ୍ଷତ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କଲେ। ସାମାନ୍ୟ କଟା ଦାଗର ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାରେ ସେ ସଂଜ୍ଞାହୀନ ପ୍ରାୟ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲେ। ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ଆତ୍ମଉପଲବ୍ଧି ହେଲା— ଯଦି ଏଇ ସାମାନ୍ୟ କ୍ଷତ ଏତେ ଅସହ୍ୟ, ତେବେ ପୂଜା ପ୍ରତିଟି ନିଶୀଥରେ ନିଜ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଶରୀର ଓ କ୍ଷତବିକ୍ଷତ

ଆମ୍ଭାକୁ ନେଇ କେଉଁ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଅସ୍ଥିରେ ଜଳୁଥିଲା! ତାର ନୀରବ କ୍ରନ୍ଦନ ଆଜି ନିବେଦିତାଙ୍କ ବିବେକକୁ ପ୍ରଳୟଙ୍କରୀ ଚିହ୍ନର ପରି ଶୁଣାଯାଉଥିଲା। କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନୁଶୋଚନାର ଏହି କ୍ଷଣ ବହୁତ ବିଳମ୍ବରେ ଆସିଥିଲା। ସାମାନ୍ୟ କିଛି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ଅନ୍ତରାଳରେ, ପୂଜା ସେଠାରୁ କେଉଁ ଏକ ଅଜ୍ଞାତ ଦିଗକୁ ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ନିଖୋଜ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା।

ନିବେଦିତାଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ଏକ ପ୍ରଳୟଙ୍କରୀ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଉଥିଲା। ତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରତୀତ ହେଉଥିଲା, ପୂଜା ଏହି କୃତ୍ରିମ ସମାଜ, ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଏବଂ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ମୁଖାଗୁଡ଼ିକଠାରୁ ବହୁ ଦୂରକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଛି ଚିକିତ୍ସ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରର ସନ୍ଧାନରେ, ମୁକ୍ତ ଆକାଶରୁ ଚିକିତ୍ସ ପବିତ୍ର ଶ୍ଵାସ ନେବା ପାଇଁ। ଏହି ଆଧୁନିକ ସମାଜରେ ‘ପୁଅ’ ଏବଂ ‘ଝିଅ’ ଶବ୍ଦ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଥିବା ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟର ଖାଲ କେତେ ଗଭୀର । ଝିଅଟିଏ ଶିକ୍ଷାର ପକ୍ଷ ଲଗାଇ ସାମାଜିକ ମହାକାଶକୁ ଉଡ଼ିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ସମାଜର କାମାନ୍ଧ ଓ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ଆଖିରେ ସେ କେବଳ ଏକ ‘ପଣ୍ୟ ସାମଗ୍ରୀ’ ଛଡ଼ା ଆଉ କିଛି ନୁହେଁ।

ଠିକ୍ ସେତିକି ବେଳେ ନିବେଦିତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅ କୁନା ହାତରୁ ଏକ ‘ମାଟି କଣ୍ଢେଇ’ ଖସି ପଡ଼ି ଧୂଳିସାତ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା। କୁନାର କ୍ରନ୍ଦନ ଶୁଣି କିଏ ଜଣେ କହୁଥିଲା— "ଆରେ ବାବୁ, ଏଇ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ମାଟି ପୁରୁଳା ପାଇଁ କ’ଣ ଏତେ ବିଳାପ କରନ୍ତି? ଏଇଟା ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲେ କ’ଣ ହେଲା, କୁନ୍ଦାର ପରା ପୁଣି ଏମିତି ନୂଆ କରି ଗଢ଼ିଦେବା।"

ବାହାରେ ପ୍ରଳୟଙ୍କରୀ ଝଡ଼ ଏବେ ଥମି ଯାଇଥିଲା। କିନ୍ତୁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍‌ର ସେଇ କର୍କଶ ଶବ୍ଦ ଭିତରେ ଘନ ମଉସା ବୁଝିସାରିଥିଲେ ଯେ, ସମାଜର କୁନ୍ଦାର ତଳରେ ମାଟି କଣ୍ଢେଇ ତ ପୁଣି ଗଢ଼ା ହୋଇପାରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେଉଁ ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ମାନ ଆଉ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଥରେ ତୁରମାର ହୋଇଯାଏ, ତାକୁ ଯୋଡ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ଏ ପୃଥିବୀରେ କୌଣସି କାରିଗର ନାହିଁ। ସ୍ମୃତିର ଅନ୍ତ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ହେଲେ ସେଇ ଭଗ୍ନ କଣ୍ଢେଇର ଖପରା ଭିତରେ ଏକ ପ୍ରଳୟଙ୍କରୀ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ ରହିଯାଇଥିଲା। "ଆମ ସମାଜର କୁନ୍ଦାରଖାନାରେ ପୂଜାମାନେ କ’ଣ କେବଳ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ଗଢ଼ା ହୁଅନ୍ତି?"

ସହର: ଏକ ମାୟାବୀ ମରୀଚିକା

Subha Kalyan Das is an emerging writer and poet with a deep passion for literature, storytelling and creative expression. His writings reflect a sensitive understanding of human emotions, social realities and the experiences that shape everyday life.

Subha Kalayan Das

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ନିଶ୍ଵାସ ଅଟକି ଯାଏ କୃତ୍ରିମ ସଭ୍ୟତା ପ୍ରାଙ୍ଗଣେ

ଶାଳପ୍ରାଂଶୁ ଅଜାଳିକା ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ କରେ ଶୂନ୍ୟର ଆକାଶ

ପାଦତଳ ମାଟି ଖୋଦେ ନିଜ ହଜିଲା ବିଶ୍ଵାସ

ପ୍ରତିଟି ଗଳିରେ ଏଠି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତାର ପ୍ରଖର ସ୍ରୋତ

ମଣିଷ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛି ନିଜେ ଏକ ଚଳନ୍ତି ଯନ୍ତ୍ର

ସମ୍ପର୍କର ସ୍ଵରୁ ଏଠି ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥର ଚରାକୁରେ

ସ୍ଵେଦର ଫଗୁଣ ମଉଳିଯାଏ ଅହଂକାରର ବନ୍ଧୁରେ

ବିଭାବରୀର ନିସ୍ତକ୍ଷତାକୁ ଚିରିଦିଏ ଗାଡ଼ିର କର୍କଶ ସ୍ଵର

ତାରାଭରା ଆକାଶ ଏଠି ଧୂଳିର ଆସ୍ତରଣେ ଧୂସର

ଏଠି ଜନ୍ମ ହଜିଯାଏ ଉଚ୍ଚାଭିଳାଷର ସେଇ ଶିଖରେ

ସମ୍ପର୍କର ରତୁ ବଦଳେ ଏହି ମୁଖାପିନ୍ଧା ସଂସାରେ

ନିଃସଙ୍ଗତାର ଚିହ୍ନର ଶୁଣିବାକୁ କାହା ପାଖେ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ

ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତାର ଦୌଡ଼ରେ ସଜିବିଁ ହଜିଯାଉଛନ୍ତି କାହିଁ?

ଗୋଟିଏ କାନ୍ଧର ଆରପାଖେ କିଏ ମୃତ କିମ୍ବା ଆହତ

କୃତ୍ରିମ ପାତେରୀ ଆଡୁଆଳେ ଏଠି, ସବୁ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଆଜି ଅନାଥ



ଶୈଶବର ଧୂଳିଘର ଏଠି କଂକ୍ରିଟ୍ ପାର୍କରେ ବନ୍ଦୀ
ବାର୍ଷିକ୍ୟର ଆକୁଳତା ଖୋଜେ ଖୋଲା ଆକାଶର ପରିଧି

ନିଃସଙ୍ଗତାର କୋଳାହଳରେ ଏଠି ପ୍ରତିଟି ପାଦ ଶବ୍ଦ
ଆଧୁନିକତାର ମୋହରେ ମାନବିକତା ଆଜି ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ

ଖୋଜେ ମୁଁ ସେଇ ମାଟିର ମହକ ଓ ଶାନ୍ତିର ସେଇ ପଲ୍ଲୀ
ଯାନ୍ତ୍ରିକତାର ଚକ୍ରବ୍ୟୁହରେ ନିଜେ ନିଜକୁ ଭୁଲି

ଆଶା ଓ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷାର ଏଇ ପାଷାଣ ନିର୍ମିତ କାରାଗାର
ବାହାରେ ଚମକ ଅଛି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଭିତରେ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ।

ହେ ସହର ତୁମେ ଏକ ସୁନ୍ଦର ବିଷାକ୍ତ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ନାମ
ଯେଉଁଠି ଜୀବନ ଖୋଜେ ନିଜର ଏକ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ବିରାମ ।

એના ઘરનું ચોક્કસ સરનામું

ABHA THAKKAR

એને ક્યારેય આપ્યું જ નહોતું મને
એના ઘરનું ચોક્કસ સરનામું,
પણ જે વિસ્તાર કહ્યું હતો એણે,
એ જ બની ગયો હતો મારું મનપસંદ ઠેકાણું...
જે એરીયાથી ક્યારેય નફરત હતી,
એજ ગલીઓમાં હવે શાંતિ મળતી,
શાયદ કારણ એક જ હતું
કે એ ત્યાં ક્યાંક રહેતો હતો,
એટલે જ એ જગ્યા મને ગમતી...
કોઈ કહે કે એને ત્યાં જોયો,
તો દિલ ધબકતું હતું જોરથી,
“કાશ હું પણ હોત ત્યાં,”
એવી ઈચ્છા થતી રોજથી...
અને જ્યારે સમય એવો આવ્યો,
કે હું જ હતી એ જ એરીયામાં,



ત્યારે લાગતું

“હવે શું ફરક પડે છે,

એક ફોન કરું તો આવી જશે સામે...”

પણ હવે બધું બદલાઈ ગયું છે,

એ સરનામું હવે સુખ નહીં આપે,

એ જ ગલીઓમાં ચાલું તો

એક અજાણી બેચેની દિલને વળગી રહે...

એના ગાડીનો નંબર હજુ યાદ છે,

દરેક સમાન ગાડીમાં એને શોધું છું,

કોઈ પડછાયો દેખાય તો

એજ હશે એમ માની લઉં છું...

જૂના ફોટાની પાછળનું બેકગ્રાઉન્ડ,

અને આ ગલીઓ –

ક્યારેક એકસરખું લાગે છે,

અને દિલ ફરી માની લે છે –

“આ તો એનું જ ઘર હશે...”

પણ હકીકત એ છે કે,

એ હવે અહીં નથી,

કદાચ ક્યાંક બીજે છે,

કદાચ કોઈ બીજાની સાથે ખુશ છે...

પણ પ્રશ્નો હજુ બાકી છે –

“શું કરતો હશે? કેમ હશે?”

અને એ બધામાં

મારું મન હજી અટવાયેલું છે...

જે સરનામું એક વખત

મને સુખ આપતું હતું,

એજ હવે બની ગયું છે

ડર, બેચેની અને નફરતનું કારણ...

કદાચ ભૂલ એ મારી હતી –

કે મેં જગ્યા સાથે લાગણી બાંધી,

અને એ વ્યક્તિને

મારું આખું વિશ્વ માની લીધું...

હવે સમજાય છે –

સુખ કોઈ સરનામામાં નથી હોતું,

ન તો કોઈ વ્યક્તિમાં પૂરું સમાય છે...

સુખ તો ત્યારે જ રહે છે,

જ્યારે દિલ પોતાનું રહે...

CORRECTION

বইয়ের পাতা

I'm a lad of 16 years . I appreciate the great decision of "The Favourite Tells Publishers" . A lot of thanks for giving a chance to connecting with respected readers through this great book & I think it's also helpful for readers & for us to connect with so many languages. I wish may you all live long by the grace of God.

Prattush Pal

আচ্ছা শিক্ষিত কি তাকেই বলে
যে হাতে বই আর কাঁধে ল্যাপটপ নিয়ে চলে ?
গাছ কেটে আপিস বানায়
এসিতে বসে পরিবেশ পড়ায়;
বাবুদের সব সালাম জানায়,
দীন-মজুর দের হেট্রোড জানায় ॥

লোকে যাদের মূর্খ বলে ,
দিন শেষে তারাই কালচার নিয়ে চলে।
ক্যাপশনেতে হিতৈষী লেখে-
অথচ সাহায্য বলতে দেয় হয়তো ফর্মালিটি;
চেয়ে দেখো ওই হকারটি দিচ্ছে নিজের সর্বাংশটি ।
যারা কাজ বলতে,, শুধু পরিবেশ আর দেশ নিয়েই চলে,
তোমার চোখে এদেরই হয়তো নষ্ট যুবক বলে ।
অক্ষর জ্ঞান নাইকো বেশি
তবুও সমাজের কাজে এঁদেরই অবদান বেশি ॥

পড়েছো বই ,তার গনতি নেই
তাইতো উন্নতিতে তোমাদের অবদানের শেষ নেই।
তবে যাদের ছোটো ভাবো ;
বইয়ের পাতায় লেখার সাথে মিলিয়ে দেখো-
মনুষ্যত্ব বলতে তাঁদেরকেই পড়ো॥



මලක් මෙනි ජීවිතය

Portia Sirimanne

විදුරු මත ඇති මල් වැනි ජීවිතේ, ජලය නෝමැතිව මිය යන බව දැන දැනත්, සිටී තවමත් මල පිපුණු කල විදුරු මත...

බිදුණු කල සියුමැලි පෙති කැඩී යන බව නොදැනුවද?

ජීවිතයට පැමිණෙන මී මැසි සමනලුන් අරන් යනී නමාට අවැසි දෑ යළි පැමිණෙනුයේත්; නමාට අවැසි දෑ ගෙන යාමට පමනි. මෙය තේරුම් නොගත් මලකී, ඒ මිතුකම් සබදතා පැවැත්වූයේ ඔවුන් සමඟ....

මලෙහි පැණි ඉවර වූ කළ, ඔවුන් නොපැමිණෙනි සැප දුක් කෙසේද යැයි විමසීමටවත්. තනියම හඬා වැලපී සිටිනා විට දී මල, මිය යනී දුක් ගෝකයෙන් තියවී.



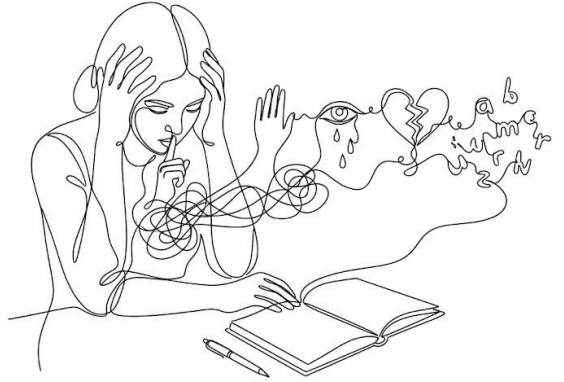
"مجھے احساس لکھنا ہے"

Rehana wafa

مجھے الفاظ لا کر دو
مجھے احساس لکھنا ہے
بھلا وہ لفظ کیا ہوں گے
ہیں جس سے میں کر پاؤں
کہ دل پر کیا گزرتی ہے

جب دعائیں رنگ نہ لائیں
قلم جو لیکے بیٹھوں میں
تو سارے لفظ کھو جائیں
جب اشکوں کو کوئی پیئے
گھٹ گھٹ کر کوئی جیئے
جہاں بولنا ضروری ہو
وہاں پر کوئی لب سی لے
تو یہ سب سبہ کے اے بدم
دل پر کیا گزرتی ہے
مجھے وہ راز لکھنا ہے

کوئی جب زعم میں آ کر
کسی کی توہین کرتا ہے
کوئی جب درد نہ جیتا ہے نہ مرتا ہے
غلط فہمی کی بھٹی میں



سلگتی رشتے روتے ہیں
کسی کے پاک جذبے گر
یونہی پامال ہوتے ہیں
تو یہ سب دیکھ کر ہمدم
دل پر کی گزرتی ہے
مجھے وہ درد لکھنا ہے
مجھے الفاظ لا کر دو
مجھے احساس لکھنا ہے

کسی بے کس کے رستے میں
کوئی کانٹا بچھائے تو
غریبوں کی غریبی کا
کوئی مزاق اڑائیے تو
بتیموں مفلسوں پر
کوئی ناحق ظلم ڈھائیے تو
یہ سب سب کے اے ہمدم
ان پر کیا گزرتی ہے
مجھے وہ کرب لکھنا ہے
مجھے الفاظ لا کر دو
مجھے احساس لکھنا ہے
بھلا وہ لفظ کیا ہوں گے
جو دنیا کو بتا پائیں
کہ دل پر کیا گزرتی ہے
ازریحانہ بنت نیاز ہمدم

CORRECTION

ನವ ಮುನುಡ

Anusha N

ಅದೆಷ್ಟೋ ಯೋಚನೆಗಳು ಮನದಾಳದಲಿ,
ದಿನನಿತ್ಯ ಹೊಸ ಘಟನೆಗಳ ಸಾಲಿನಲಿ;
ದಿನಕ್ಕೊಂದು ಬಣ್ಣ, ದಿನಕ್ಕೊಂದು ಕಥೆ,
ಭಾವತರಂಗಗಳ ತೊಳಲಾಟದ ವೃಥೆ.

ಮಂಜಿನ ಹೊದಿಕೆಯಲಿ ಮೂಡುವ ಪ್ರಭಾತ,
ಚಿಲಿಪಿಲಿ ಹಾಡುವ ಹಕ್ಕಿಗಳ ಸುಪ್ರಭಾತ;
ಅರುಣೋದಯದ ಹೊಸಬೆಳಕು ಹರಡಿದಾಗ,
ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಸುಂದರವೆನಿಸಿತು ಎನ್ನ ಮನರಾಗ.

ಗಗನದಲಿ ರೆಕ್ಕೆ ಬಿಚ್ಚಿ ಹಾರುವ ಹಕ್ಕಿಯಂತೆ,
ಎದೆಯೊಳಗೆ ಸದ್ದಿಲದೆ ಹರಿಯುವ ನೆನಪಿನಂತೆ;
ಕನಸುಗಳ ರೆಕ್ಕೆಗೆ ನವವರ್ಣ ತುಂಬುತ್ತಲಿ,
ಬದುಕೊಂದು ಚಿಗುರೊಡೆದಿದೆ ಹೊಸಬೆಳಕ ಹಾದಿಯಲಿ.

ನಗು, ಮಾತು, ಮುನಿಸಿನ ಲಹರಿಯಲಿ,
ಮುರಿಯದೆನಿಸುವ ನಂಟಿನ ಭಯದಲಿ;
ಮೌನದ ಕ್ಷಣಗಳು ಮನದಲಿ ಮೂಡಿತು,
ಮುಂದಿನ ದಿನಗಳ ಚಿತ್ರವು ಸುಳಿಯಿತು.

ತಿರುಗಿತು ಕಾಲದ ಪುಸ್ತಕದ ಪುಟ,
ದೂರಾದವು ಜೊತೆಯಾಗಿದ್ದ ಪದಗಳ ಕೂಟ;
ಹೊಸದೊಂದು ಅಧ್ಯಾಯಕ್ಕೆ ಜಾರಿದವು,
ನೆನಪಿನ ಅನುಭೂತಿಗಳು ಮಸುಕಾದವು.



ಚದುರಿದ ಕನಸಿಗೂ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿದೆ ನವ ಮುನ್ನುಡಿಯ ಲಜ್ಜೆ,
ವಿದಾಯದ ತಿರುವಿನಲ್ಲೇ ನವ ಪಯಣದ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆ;
ಅಧ್ಯಾಯ ಮುಗಿದ ಕೊನೆ ಗೆರೆಯಂಚಿನಲಿ,
ಬೆಳ್ಳಿಬೆಳಕಿನ ಚಿತ್ತಾರವಿದೆ ಹೃದಯದ ಬಾಗಿಲಲಿ.

CORRECTION