Evolution of an idea into the form of language
Editor's note

It was a time of great social upheaval. Students were fomenting clubs in every corner to explore and appreciate all facets of life. Many perished under the onslaught of academic pressures and were cast into oblivion. Some lay dormant for weeks after inception, rearing their heads once in a while to maintain relevance, but some carried on. Ours is a tale of survivors.

The CMI Literature Club, the brainchild of Our Glorious Leader Ashwani Anand, was founded in the early days of Semester 1, 2018 A.D. to infuse our lives with meaning and purpose. We kept the club alive by meeting every week to discuss our personal forays into literature, as readers and writers alike. Our numbers rose, fell, and stabilised as members’ perseverance and willingness to listen to someone else were tested. Not all who are with us were there from the start, and not all who were with us remained, but the ragtag band of readers and writers kept on, motivated by the allure of publishing a magazine featuring our original works.

Through our club, we organised events like the Haiku workshop to open up avenues for those outside the club to partake in a communal form of writing. The resulting output can be seen in the pages of this very magazine. Now, I have worked on a magazine before in school, and editing sessions are almost surely charged with conflict and politics. It makes for a juicy editorial that goes behind the curtain. I regret to inform the reader that the only thing the editors fought against was procrastination. Editing was rather smooth and uneventful, with the unfortunate consequence being that I have nothing of consequence to say in this editorial. Thus, I have resorted to semi-ironic dramatisation, meta-commentary, and hyphenated-words.

I firmly believe the adage that those who don’t love literature just haven’t found the right book. Seeing a friend or acquaintance find that ‘right book’ is always delightful. And while I’m aware that the statement is a trite one, that doesn’t make it any less true. The idea of literature has been ingrained in the human psyche ever since the first time a heartbroken man wrote out his tale of woe. Unfortunately, we don’t often get the opportunity to share our own stories. CMI Literature Club became that space for many of us, as you can see for yourself in this first of (hopefully) many issues of Parâ - an effort by, for, and of writers, poets, and artists.

~ Parasuram Venkatesh
The club was formed in August '18 at Chennai Mathematical Institute. We are a group of literature enthusiasts. We meet together on a weekly basis, discuss different forms of literature, share our own literary creations and have lots of fun. We also try to organize writing workshops and events whenever we can. We are proud to present this magazine, a product of one of our brainstorming sessions. We hope you have as much fun reading it as we had putting it together for you all.
Contents

Stories
Janice Patterson  1
When you dance with the devil  3
The Collector  6
1346  8
काण्ड हो गया है  10
കണ്ഡം ഹോ ഗയാ ഇണം  11

Poetry
Cenotaph  19
Craven  20
Creation  23
Look not at the colour  24
तब और अब  25
Home  27
Two of a kind  28
The lost sunsets  29
जल्भा  30
Quatrains for a score  31

Photography
Sandakphu Trip  44
Tessellate'19  49

Events@CMI
Haiku Workshop  32
Sanskrit Divas  37
Book Discussions  38
Free Writing  39

Book Reviews  53
STORIES

"My battery is low and it's getting dark." - Opportunity, 2019
Janice Patterson

Sriram Akella

Janey should never know. Damn! The whole school knows. Janice Patterson: star-student, head of the choir, captain of the swimming team, dream girl of every guy. I hate to admit it, but I was knocked out by her charming smile and cute looks. What’s wrong in that, you say. Nothing, just the fact that she’s dating another guy, Robert.

I sprinted to the terrace. The terrace was forbidden and the door to it always locked. I learned to pick a lock from my father’s books and tried the terrace. Worked like a charm. The school didn’t bother locking it again and no student came near the terrace. It’s where I spend most of my time.

I remember the first time I saw Janey. I was at the chess club. I was playing an intense game with Robert, who happens to be a strong player. We had bet a hundred dollars. It was his turn when he said, “Turn around, 6 ‘o’ clock.”

I thought it was some trick he was playing on me, I heard footsteps but someone was always walking around. Then again there was this sweet aroma all around. I still remember the scent.

When I turned around, there she was, in a blue T-shirt and a pink skirt. Words can’t describe what I saw, or maybe I’m a poor writer, but for the first time in my life I wished I was playing Black. She walked into the Library with two girlfriends.

I stared at the entrance to the library for five seconds after she was gone, unable to decide whether or not I should go in. A hundred bucks was too much to lose.

“Your move,” said Robert. I had already calculated the variation he was playing and without further thought played the move I had in mind. “Blunder,” said Robert as he captured my Queen.

Back to the terrace. Rumor spread in the boys dorm that some retard had written a letter to Janey with my name and dropped it in her swimming pool locker. Of all the places, why the pool locker? That’s where she keeps her swimsuit and her... stuff. Now she’ll think I’m a pervert.

Dammit! I have to destroy that letter and I don’t have time! I spend a few minutes on the terrace deciding on a plan. I descend the stairs and stealthily walk to the swimming pool. I have about an hour before Janice shows up. I touch the pick in my pocket and let out a sigh.

I visit the pool often to watch Janey, so I know where her locker is. There are just a couple of swimmers in the pool and Janey isn’t around. I let out another sigh. I’ll just pretend I’m opening my locker and get the letter.

The school lockers can be opened with anything ranging from a toothpick to a grenade. Sure enough, there is a letter in her locker, buried under her swimsuit and her... stuff. I pull out the letter and pocket it. Just when I’m about to close the locker door-

“Pete, is that you?”

I froze; I could hear my heart beating in my chest and I was sure Janey could hear it too. I turned around with extreme difficulty, as a few droplets of sweat collected on my forehead. There she was, along with two of her girlfriends.

“Hey...” was all I could muster up.

“What are you doing in my locker?”

I fell silent for a few seconds. She looked at me with those beautiful blue eyes and both hands on her perfect hips. She wore a pink T-shirt and a mini-skirt, I tried my best not to drop my eyes. Well, I tried.
“I’m sorry, Janice,” I said and bowed my head a little, to get a better look at her legs. “I forgot where my locker is. I mistook yours for mine.”

I think she believed my lie. The truth is I don’t have a locker at the swimming pool, but Janey doesn’t know that... I think.

“Yours was unlocked, don’t forget to lock it,” I said, just for the hell of it. “That’s strange” she said. “I’m pretty sure I locked it.” I shrugged my shoulders and walked away. That was a close call. Now that I was back to my senses, I pretended as if I was searching for my locker.

“Any luck?” Janey asked after a few seconds. “None,” I replied with a grin. She smiled back and walked toward the changing room with her swimsuit. I patted myself on the back for completing a successful mission. As soon as she went in, I sprinted to the terrace. I was drenched in sweat by the time I reached the top. I pulled out the piece of paper from my pocket, and you have no idea how horrified I was when I saw that the letter was addressed to me. Written in shabby handwriting:

Dear Pete, Read and burn this. How you got this letter, remains a secret between you and me. Come meet me at the Chess Club, 4 'o' clock. We got a score to settle. I won’t let you get away with that Queen Sacrifice you pulled off last time.

Robert. Flip the page before burning.

That damned bastard, I thought. The game I spoke of, he lost. I had later promoted my pawn and gotten my Queen back. I flipped the page in excitement, my fingers were trembling. Written at the bottom corner with a pencil in small illegible letters:

P.S. She knows. Chess ain't real life bud.
Harris had to wait before the husband left. Everyday for the past two weeks the husband had left his apartment at ten in the night, driven to a seedy motel outside the city for his daily meetup with his secretary. Harris knew this because he had followed him each time. They usually stayed in for an hour, sometime more. Plenty of time to get the job done.

The bedroom light finally turned off. He saw the husband get in his car and drive off. After waiting a few minutes to make sure he had left, Harris went to work. The apartment was on the third floor and there was a water pipe that went up the building right past the balcony. It was almost too easy. He was inside the apartment five minutes later. The wife’s footsteps could be heard in the kitchen. She heard him when he was still in the living room. She started to scream but he was on to her in a second. The punch she got would have levelled a man much bigger than her.

He peered out the window to see if anyone had heard her but the security guard was still in his chair, unmoved. He walked to the liquor cabinet and pulled out a bottle of whisky and a glass. Poured the whisky into the sink until the bottle was half full, poured some into the glass and placed it on the coffee table in the living room. Going back into the kitchen, he lifted the wife’s unconscious body and smashed the bottle into the side of her head. He didn’t need to check to know she was dead.

He placed her on the kitchen floor and picked up the telephone right above her on the wall. Dialled the line to the security desk and left the phone dangling from the wall. Stepping into the doorway of the kitchen, he inspected the scene before him. Everything seemed to be fine. That should make Warren happy, he thought. His job done, he left the way he had come.

--Detective Warren entered the mall and and went up the escalator. The first floor was a massive food court. It was nearing lunchtime and the crowd was starting to increase. He preferred it that way. More people meant he was less likely to be remembered. A year ago, he had received a call about a murder of a homeless man. A thankless task for a detective. The general rule on these was to do the best you could and then hope that three months later, they allowed you to close it due to lack of evidence. A week later, another startlingly similar death turned up. This time he asked that it be assigned to him. When ten days later, there was another one, Warren decided to do some searching. He found five more in the next precinct. He took those on as well. His Captain wasn’t pleased. No one in their right minds takes on five stone cold cases. His numbers were bad enough as it is.

Warren was convinced that there was something much more serious going on. No matter how much he tried to convince his captain that they had a serial killer on their hands, he wasn’t listened to. The department had more important matters to concern themselves with. Nobody cared about a few dead hobos. Warren put in a request for additional manpower. Request Denied. Finally Warren accepted that he was on his own and went to work. For six months he spent his nights looking out for suspicious activity in the areas where the homeless people were killed. In that time there were no other new cases that matched his and his Captain begged him to drop it but to no avail. Then one night he spotted someone a little too well dressed for a hobo snooping around an alley where two of his victims were found. He followed him but lost him in the trailer park. The next day, there was a fresh one on his desk.

By this time, the number of unsolved cases against his name had reached a point where it could no longer be ignored. His Captain called him into his office and told him that unless he got his act together and solved some actual cases, he was getting reassigned to Records. Essentially the end of a policeman’s career. Most of them rotted away there until they could walk away with their twenty year pension.
His anger and frustration at this point had driven him beyond reason. To the point of insanity. And his mind finally snapped two weeks later.

After asking around in the trailer park, a few homeless people finally gave him his first lead. Some friends of theirs who slept under a bridge near the trailer park had seen a man sneaking around the last few nights. What drew their attention was that he did not smell. At all. Most unusual for a hobo.

Three nights later Warren spotted him under the bridge. He chased the killer for five blocks and finally caught him when he ran into an alley with a dead end. He handcuffed him, took him to the station house and spent the night at his desk. When his Captain arrived in the morning, the first thing that Warren told him was that he had caught the guy who killed the seven homeless people. Six hours later, Harris was released. Insufficient evidence, the D.A. said.

Warren waited until Harris was released and then followed him out of the precinct building. When he caught up with Harris, he tapped him on the shoulder. Harris turned around to look at the detective. Warren pointed to a café across the road.

“Meet me there at six today.”

--Warren saw Harris sitting at a table for two and walked over. Neither of them said a word for some time. Finally, it was Warren who spoke.

“The girl last night. Was that you?”

“Yes of course it was me. When did you get the call?”

“The night shift got the call. It was on my desk this morning.”

A busboy came to their table to clear up and both of them went silent. Once he was gone, it was Warren who spoke.

“So what's the story? Who did it?”

“Her husband. He used to beat her. Neighbours called the cops on them a few times, but she refused to press charges. They lived downtown until a year back. Same story there. Last night he had too much, she did something that drove him nuts and he took the bottle to her.”

Warren said nothing for a while. Finally,

“Where's the husband? We haven't been able to find him. His office said he didn't come in this morning.”

“He's shacked up in a motel with his secretary. This is the address.”

Harris slid a piece of paper across the table.

“He's still in there”, he continued. “So I assume he hasn't seen the news yet. He's bound to come out and some point. You'll get him then.”

He saw that Warren still wasn't convinced.

“Relax Warren. The guy was a scumbag. Any jury is going to convict him.”

“Relax? How the hell am I supposed to relax? It's fine for you. You enjoy this, you sick freak. I went into the apartment. You could smell the blood in the air, there was so much of it. And how do I tell the Captain I found the husband? Just stumbled upon him in the motel?! This is a mess. And you're going to clean it up. You better come up with a story on the husband. Or I'm going to make sure you go away for this.”

“Oh sure. Why don't you do that?”, said Harris. “Come and get me. And when you do, I'll have a great story to give to everyone. A cop setting up murders to jack up his arrest record? The papers will love that. Even the department won't be able to throw that under the rug. This is your mess. You deal with it.”
Warren was beginning to panic now.

“Hey! Listen to me. If this ever comes out, it’s both of us who get the heat, alright? Not just me. We’re going to have to deal with this together.”

“That’s where you’re wrong, Warren. I don’t have to deal with anything. Don’t forget, I’m the one who knows how to set up a crime scene. Things go sideways at your end, they’re going to find you soon enough. I’m thinking, in a motel room with your brains blown out. There’ll be a note too. How you’re ashamed of yourself for being a terrible cop, hope your family forgives you, the whole deal. So you better get to work.”

The detective looked at him stunned. His face was white. He had broken out in a cold sweat. Harris got up to leave.

“Oh and one more thing Warren. We’re not going to stop. After this one’s wrapped up, I’m going to find another one. And then another, and then another. Hell, by the time I’m finished you might even have made Captain. Who knows?”

Smirking at the detective’s dazed expression, Harris picked up his tray, emptied it into the thrashcan and walked towards the escalator. Warren remained in his seat. He wasn’t getting up any time soon.
The collector
Trina De

“I prefer the tangible over the abstract.”

The heaving voice came from across the lawn, out of breath, having thrown the frisbee back and forth for almost 4 hours now. But it was summer and no one cared about things running late. There was no homework that needed finishing or assessments to prepare for.

The neighbor’s corgi came shooting out of nowhere, outside the board fence, its barks coming closer one moment and fading into the distance at the next instance. It was chasing that squirrel again. The one it had been chasing all summer.

“So you’d prefer to have something undeniable handed to you. Even if the product of your imagination could be so much richer? You’d willingly forfeit the privilege of it being esoteric to be able to perceive by touch?”

His own breath was not as ragged as his elder brother’s across the lawn. He had no particular interest in the game his brother seemed to love so much. The reason for obliging was only to give him company and possibly to provide his sibling some perspective in the argument they’d been having since dinner time the previous day.

“Yes I would. I would if the alternative was having things floating about in your head.” came the reply.

“It isn’t like that. Just think. The other day I was on the roof of the main building and there was a teenager trying his first puff under the supervision of trusted friends. While I could’ve in that moment held the friends accountable for standing by and supporting such a foolish act, it was an inexplicable feeling to have witnessed this transgression of childhood into adolescence. The phase where there’ll be many secrets that’ll come undone in presence of the right people. And it’s not the only one that’s interesting.”

He sincerely hoped his elder brother would start to see reason by now and succumb to the sublime point he’d just made. But as it turned out, his sporty counterpart had no such intention.

“Well in my opinion that’s being in places you shouldn’t be. Like prying.” The last bit was said in a slightly raised taunting voice complemented by the force with which he threw back the frisbee.

This was indeed something hard to justify. These moments, our protagonist felt were moments of unison and not isolation. For him, it all strung people together. Even though not all people experience a first puff, it was his belief, we all experience something akin to it. Something that marks the closing chapter of innocence of childhood for us. Or the beginning of adulthood. Awestruck by some spectacle of nature or watching a tiny being experience one of its firsts, something common resonates within us.

Something universal, within. The roles being reversed there is still plenty to gain. Being the observer, someone’s experience becomes part of our memory too. And this was a collectible for our protagonist. The sun was losing its strength by now. The neighbor’s child, most probably done with the required amount of standard educational activity for the day, had piled toys into a hand-drawn wagon and was happily, noisily dragging it across the pavement surrounding their lawn. The rattling of the time worn wheels of the wagon seemed to bring great joy to the bearer of the wagon and the fact that the trucks weren’t real made no difference at all.

“If I were to call myself that, I would collect something like stones or stamps or something. Collecting what you do, I’m not even sure it counts. I think you simply like having the title.”

“In that I think we are all collectors. Some of us collect stones and stamps as you put it and others, slightly different things. A snippet of heated conversation overheard on the street or on the torn photograph in an old library book, or the doodle on the margin of a dog-eared book lets us in, for just a second into a
stranger’s imagination. I cherish those moments, not knowing who each individual bit belongs to. But the frescoe it culminates to is beyond human expression.”

But he on his part couldn’t place such curiosity too well. It seemed normal to him to not want his experience of things to come under scrutiny of people like his little brother here. Sometimes having him as a brother felt like a brand new Cadillac being driven at full speed down a dead-ended alley.

“Enough now. You haven’t made a proper throw all morning. “

He decided it was time they ended the argument and concentrated on the game. He would let him off alright but not without warning.

“And don’t go around spying on me or my things. I know your skeletons are bigger than mine.”

...“I lost you like time itself. Without resistance, watching, helpless as little by little your opacity dimmed and transparency claimed your place.”

This, his favourite memory from the summer kept playing on and on in his head. It wasn’t only his memory. His prudent, unimaginative elder brother was the creator of those words. He had said them aloud at a time he believed he was alone. Unknowing to him, the Collector had now made his very first addition to what he liked to call his jar of broken hearts.
The moon emerged from behind a cloud and lit up the path ahead. The light was comforting, even though I knew this forest route like the lines of my palm and the pattern of encrusted gems on my sword hilt. My horse Ebony seemed to gain confidence too, and he quickened his pace as I urged him towards the clearing.

It was a quiet night, apart from the occasional screech of an insect, and so the sound of my robe blowing in the wind and my armour clattering beneath it seemed louder than they really were. Not to mention the thudding of my heart, which seemed to have risen above its correct position to the base of my throat - and climbing.

I arrived at the clearing far too soon. I was early. More time for me to brood over what would happen if the next hour or so did not go my way.

I thought back to the first time I met Agnes. It was at the feast following the knights’ tournament in Birmingham, on the castle grounds. She was there as the daughter of an elderly lord who had supervised the tournament, but I had not seen her at any of the fights. She glided across the grass in a lime green gown with a black overcoat and an elaborate headdress. I had a gash on my arm from the tournament duel I lost just days before, and I could feel hot blood throbbing in that general area as the pace of my heart quickened.

When I felt braver, I introduced myself to her, but not before I spied her in deep conversation with the winner of the tournament. He was completely masked, probably to hide an unsightly face wound. I never did find out his name.

I met her many times later, but he was always there as well, like an annoying fly. While she spoke to me cordially, there was a familiarity in the way she spoke to him. But she never had the fire in her eyes that a woman in love should have. Accomplished knight though he may be, he did not have her heart, and I took it up as a challenge to win her from this unworthy man. She was intelligent, and articulate, and graceful, and deserved someone who did not hide his face longer than a wound usually takes to heal! And so here I was, waiting in the clearing to duel him.

Ebony began to fidget impatiently after a while. He was a war-horse, with high sensitivity and sharp reflexes. Indefinite waiting periods were not for him, especially as he could see I was prepared for an unfriendly interaction. He was always as charged up as I was.

Finally, the sound of another set of hooves sounded through the trees, and soon my adversary stood before me on his red-brown horse. His face was hidden by a helmet, as always, and he raised his lance which glinted in the moonlight. I raised mine too, and thus having agreed to eschew courtesies, we began to duel.

Within moments I lost all thoughts of women and tournaments. The instinct that I had developed since childhood took over, and I slashed and stabbed with a mind as blank as the night sky. Ebony and the red-brown horse moved around with gusto, as if they knew why we were fighting. My opponent fought brilliantly and it was impossible to predict his next move. There were at least two occasions where I would have been impaled if not for Ebony’s quick feet. It was always exhilarating to joust with someone this skilful. For a long time we remained evenly matched and both of us began to tire.
But, when I was least prepared for it, Agnes’ resplendent face suddenly invaded my mind. After a momentary distraction, it in fact provided the final impetus I needed. With a surge and a cry, I knocked him off his horse. With a euphoric rage, I prepared to hurl my lance through him and into the ground. Then I stopped short, realising I did not want to kill him. I slowly moved my weapon downwards towards his face and deftly - if I may say so myself - manoeuvred to remove his already slightly damaged helmet. Ebony whinnied.

Panting, I looked at his face for the first time. I had to blink a few times, because all I could see was Agnes’ face! Is this what infatuation does, you see one person’s face in everyone else’s face? No, it could not be. I looked again, after trying to shake the thought. It was to no avail. I alighted from my horse and knelt to get a better look, glad he - or whoever I had been duelling - could not see the horror on my face through my still-intact visor.

The eyes and brows and nose and cheeks were undoubtedly Agnes’, but the upper lip had a brown moustache, and on the chin was a small brown goatee. I was staring down at Agnes’ identical twin, and it all fell into place - the comfort she showed around him, yet she was clearly not in love with him.

“You’re her brother,” I said, still heaving from the combat. “She set you up, to protect herself from my advances. But why? Does she love another?”

He was very much alive, but motionless. I gave him some brandy from my hip-flask and he sat up.

“Yes, she loves another.”

“Who?”

“The child of Lord Wellstood. Joan.”

“John?”

“No, Joan.”

“A woman?”

“Indeed.” He was barely whispering, but his voice said a lot of things.

I looked out into the distance, trying to understand what he meant. She loved a woman? My head was pounding and I was too tired to comprehend this. I had won the battle but lost the war. I tried to comfort myself with the idea of Agnes being happy and in love, even if not with me. But a woman? What did that even mean? It was too much to think about all at once.

He had been a good brother, but now was not the time to appreciate that. The night seemed to have become darker than before. I was suddenly aware of every ache and discomfort in my body. “Come, Ebony, let’s go.” I left him in the clearing. He had sat up, he would find his way home.

I dressed my wounds before going to bed. Usually while doing something this mindless, my mind would wander to the most wonderful woman I had met. But that thought seemed tarnished today. Everything about the whole affair created an incurable ache, save for her brother’s gallantry which I could not help but appreciate as a fellow knight. I had lost her. I had never had her. If women could be in love with women, what else could be possible...? The last thought I had before falling asleep was of the silhouette of Agnes’ brother’s broad shoulders as he had emerged before me earlier that night.
काण्ड हो गया है
पंकज कुमार

बात उन दिनों की है, जब मेरे बहुत सारे मित्र अपना फेसबुक-स्टेट्स "ट्रेवेलिंग फ्रॉम फूकर्ट टू बार्सिलोना " लिख रहे थे, तो मैं सी.एम.ए. -शातल की सवारी का ही आनन्द लेने का विश्व था | चलो ये सफर जैसे तैसे रुका, और हम घर गये | ठीक से पहुंचे भी नहीं थे के , सौंदर्य ने बताया के "काण्ड हो गया है", वापस आने का संदेश आया था, बुलाया था उसका, जिसको सभी जानते है यहां, अगर आप परिचित नहीं हैं, तो इस सेमेस्टर के अंत तक जान जाएंगे, कहा गया था- एक घंटे में वापस आओ और अपनी अलमारी खाली करो | अब भाई दिली से चेत्रई एक घंटे में, अमा यार, वेरिएबल को वैल्यू असाइन कर रहे हो क्या ? इससे पहले के हमारी प्रार्थनाये सुनी जाती, अत्याचार किया जा चुका था | अब बारी थी अपने सामान को सवार देखने की, किसी का बंद-काजू-बादाम का डिब्बा गायब था, तो कहीं आधा लीटर शहद दिखायी नहीं पड़ा, स्किपिंग-रोप, लाइजोल, झाड़ू, चाकू-चम्चों की चर्चा यहां उपयुक्त नहीं लगती | ये सब देखकर मन ठिठका, और मैं अपने सामान की ओर लपका, लेपटॉप और प्रमाण-पत्र गायब थे | जान निकलने ही बाली थी के ये सुनकर जान में जान आयी, के मेरे दोनों चीजें उनके ऑफिस में हैं | हमने जिन बिनसौ शब्दों में प्रार्थना की, उन शब्दों का स्थान उनके शब्दकोष में नहीं था, लगाता था के बलपूर्वक उनको हटाया गया था | खैर हमें हमारा लेपटॉप, जो उस दिन ऑक्सीजन की तरह जरूरी था, क्योंकि ग्रीष्म-कालीन इंटरनशिप की रिपोर्ट जमा करनी थी, नहीं मिल सका, क्यूं ? क्यूंकि उस दिन इंस्टीट्यूट में अवकाश था, और उनके ऑफिस की अलमारी की चब्बी, उनके पास रहने की पूर्ता, यहां वर्षों से है | हमें मन तो दुखा, के जिस प्रकार हमारी अनुपस्थिति में, हमारी अलमारी को खोला गया है, ऐ साला, हम भी तोड़ दें ताला, उनकी अलमारी का | पर देखिये न, जल में रहकर मगर से बैर थोड़े ही ना करेंगे, क्या कहते हो अश्वी, ले लेते क्या दुश्मनी ? सुनिए, उपयोक्ता नहीं हैं हम, अवसर आएगा, तो मन तो है, जैसे इस प्राणी ने ये बस फोड़े हैं बिना दीवाली, हम भी खरीदेंगे किसी दिन "माटी का तेल और माचिस की तीली" ||
കെട്ടിയിരിക്കുന്ന കാലാഘ്നം

മുട്ടയിൽ

കാലാഘ്നം അത് പരിവർത്തിക്കുന്ന മേലെയ്ക്കും കുറവെന്നിവരെ തെറ്റാണ് ഇനി. തെറ്റാണ് ഇനി. അപകടകൾ അമോബയിൽ

ഇനി കെട്ടിയിരിക്കുന്ന പ്രാണിയുടെ കേന്ദ്രം മനോഹരമാണ് കാലാഘ്നം എന്ന് പുറപ്പെട്ടുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. പുറപ്പെട്ടുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന കാലാഘ്നം മനോഹരമാണ്.

എല്ലാവരും കാലാഘ്നം പണിക്കുന്നതിന് മനോഹരമാണ്. നമ്മുടെ പാട്ടുകാരാണ് മനോഹരമാണ്. നമ്മുടെ പാട്ടുകാരാണ് മനോഹരമാണ്. നമ്മുടെ പാട്ടുകാരാണ് മനോഹരമാണ്.

പടിയുടെ മത്സ്യം ഏഴ് പരിവർത്തിക്കുന്ന കാലാഘ്നം.

"കെട്ടിയിരിക്കുന്ന കാലാഘ്നം..." അവ പറഞ്ഞു.
"കമ്പ കൊണ്ട് നോക്കൂ..." നാലു നാലു ഭാഗമായി ഏറ്റുവിട്ട് കമ്പമെടുക്കുന്ന കമ്പയുടെ വസ്തുത പിടിപ്പിക്കുക. വരെ കവിയായിരുന്ന അയിരം പ്രോഫസർ.

നാലു നാലു ഭാഗമായി ഏറ്റുവിട്ട് കയറുന്ന ഭിക്കൻ പിറു. നാലു പെൺകുട്ടികൾ പിടിപ്പിക്കുക.

കിന്തു കാറി കൊണ്ട് പെട്ടിയായ ടീയിൽവെങ്ങുമാൻ. സ്ത്രീകൾക്കും നിരന്തരം വെട്ടിയാരുന്ന തുവൽ എന്നുടർന്ന് വെട്ടിയാരുന്ന തുവൽ പ്രതിപാദികയാടുന്ന് കൈയാടുന്ന് തുടരുന്നു.

കിന്തു കാറി കൊണ്ട് പെട്ടിയായ ടീയിൽവെങ്ങുമാൻ. സ്ത്രീകൾക്കും നിരന്തരം വെട്ടിയാരുന്ന തുവൽ എന്നുടർന്ന് വെട്ടിയാരുന്ന തുവൽ പ്രതിപാദികയാടുന്ന് തുടരുന്നു.
കുഞ്ഞിൻറെ പ്രണയം പിണ്ഡാന്തത എന്തുമാണ് വേണ്ടത് ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ രാസവൈപ്പ്?

കുഞ്ഞിന്റെ കഥയില്‍. കൂടാതെ പരിചയത്തില്‍ അതുകൊണ്ട് പുരാതനതയുടെ

കായലില്‍തന്നെ വെള്ളവും നിരല്‍ പൂക്കളും ഇരുമ്പ് മാത്രമേ വെള്ളത്തിന്റെ

കുഞ്ഞിന്റെ റയ്സ് സ്റ്റോറും വെള്ളം കുറഞ്ഞ പുറ്

" നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളില്‍നിന്നും ലോകം കാണുന്ന വെള്ളം ക്രമീകരിച്ചു. എന്നാ‍‍ണ്‌ അനുഭവം നല്‍കുന്ന കാലാന്തരിമ്യം. മാത്രം മനോഹരമായ പൂക്കളും. "

നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളില്‍നിന്നും ലോകം കാണുന്ന വെള്ളം ക്രമീകരിച്ചു. എന്നാ‍‍ണ്‌ അനുഭവം നല്‍കുന്ന കാലാന്തരിമ്യം. മാത്രം മനോഹരമായ പൂക്കളും.

" അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര പ്രാപ്തു പരിചയങ്ങളുടെ? "

വാഴ്ത്തു തുറന്ന തുറന്ന്. പുള്ളികളുടെ പുള്ളി.
"അതെ പെരിയാറില്‍?"

"മകനെ മാത്രമായി പെരിയാറില്‍?"

"അപ്പോഴ പെരിയാറില്‍ വെച്ച് തോമ. തോമാണ് കബാല്‍ എന്ന് കെട്ടിപ്പറ്റി."

"പെരിയാറിലും വരെ പുനരുഡ്ഡൂസും ചെയ്തു വരെ. എന്നാണ് പരിഷേധത്തിന്റെ കാരണം കശുടെ? ക്ഷേത്രവും കൊട്ടാര വളരുന്നത് എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു."

"തമ്മില്‍ മാത്ര പെരിയാറിലെ അവസാനം പുറപ്പെട്ടു എന്നും തമ്മില്‍ കശുടെ? "

"തമ്മില്‍ കശുടെ."

"അവരെ തോമാണ്?"

"ഇതില്‍ തോമാണ് തോമാണ് കശുടെ."

"അവരെ മാത്ര? "

"അതേ കേടും മാത്രമായി."

"അവരും? "

"പെരിയാറില്‍ കശുടെ? ക്ഷേത്രവും കശുടെയും."

"മകനെ കശുടെയും മാത്രമായി വരെ? "

"അവരെ തോമാണ് എന്നും തോമാണ് കശുടെയും."

"പെരിയാറില്‍ കശുടെയും മാത്രമായി വരെ? "

"അവരെ തോമാണ് എന്നും തോമാണ് കശുടെയും. لا."
"ഗിരിയാട്ട് കാമിലു? ഗിരിയാട്ട് സൂര്യാമേശവാൾ കാമിലുകൊള്ളുമോ? കൊടി ഗിരിയാട്ട് കാമിലിൽ പോകാമോ. " എന്നാണ് പസി ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നത് എവിടെനാണ്
"കാമിലിൽ... 

എന്നും കാമിലിൽ."

ആരിയിലെ കാമിലി ചെക്കി രാവിലെ അന്നാകെ പോകാമോ

" എന്നെന്ന് ഗിരിയാട്ട് പറഞ്ഞു? "

എന്നാണെന്ന്, പരിമിതമായ പ്രവചണമായിരുന്നു? "

എന്നാണെന്ന്, പരിമിതമായ പ്രവചണം ബ്ലൂഡിസിനോ? "

എന്നാണെന്ന്, പരിമിതമായ പ്രവചണം ബ്ലൂഡിസിനോ? "

എന്നാണെന്ന്, പരിമിതമായ പ്രവചണം ബ്ലൂഡിസിനോ? പ്രവചണ

" എന്നെന്ന് എന്നാണെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞു എന്നാണെന്ന്. "

കൊടി എന്നെന്ന് എന്നാണ് എന്നാണെന്ന്.
" നാലാംകാല കവിയായാണ് തെറി ഒരു കഥാപാത്രത്തിന്റെ
മുഖം. നാലാംകാല ഒരു കവിയായാണ് കഥാപാത്രത്തിന്റെ
മുഖം എന്നും കഥാപാത്രത്തിന്റെ
മുഖം അടയാളം. എന്നിരുന്നു ഒരു കവിയായാണ്
തെറി. എന്നും അതിന്റെ
മുഖം എന്നും കഥാപാത്രത്തിന്റെ
മുഖം അടയാളം. " തെറി ഒരു കവിയായാണ്
മുഖം. നാലാംകാല ഒരു കവിയായാണ്

tെറി.

" തെറി ഒരു കവിയായാണ്

#
"അല്ലെങ്കിൽ നാവികനെ തോറാണെന്നുകൊണ്ടാണ്. പിന്നീട് നിരവധി കാലാവധികേരിക്കുന്നതിനുടെ പ്രമാണം കൊണ്ട് വെച്ചാണ് കണക്കാക്കിയത്. വിധിയും നിരക്കുകേന്ദ്രം പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നതിനു മുമ്പ് പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നില്ല. അയ്യപ്പും വിദേശാരാധകനും കെട്ടിയാടിപ്പിന്റെ അതിനെന്ന് ക്ഷണിക്കുന്നു."

ലോമെൻ കെട്ടു നിരക്കുകേന്ദ്രം

"അല്ലെങ്കിൽ നാവികനെ തോറാണെന്നുകൊണ്ടാണ്. പിന്നീട് നിരവധി കാലാവധികേരിക്കുന്നതിനു മുമ്പ് പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നില്ല. വിദേശാരാധകനും കെട്ടിയാടിപ്പിന്റെ അതിനെന്ന് ക്ഷണിക്കുന്നു. നിരക്കുകേന്ദ്രം പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നതിനു മുമ്പ് പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നില്ല.

എന്റെ മുമ്പും അതിനെന്നു പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നില്ല.

"പിന്നീട് നിരവധി കാലാവധികേരിക്കുന്നതിനു മുമ്പ് പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നില്ല"
ക്രമീകരിച്ചുണ്ടാവുന്നതിനായി എന്തുമായി ചെയ്തു. തൊട്ടെ മുനി
പറഞ്ഞു.

മാണ് പ്രഭാഷിണിയെങ്കിൽ ഇത്തരം സൊപ്പമോ സംഭന്ധമോ മുമ്പ്?

" എനിക്ക് കണക്കാക്കുവാൻ പറ്റിയത് എന്തും പറഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല മാത്രമാണ്? "

താളാട്ടു പെടുന്നു.

തൊട്ടെ നെൽക്കുകവീട്ടോ എന്നിങ്ങനെ പ്രിയറുകയോ മാത്രമേ ആഴമായിരുന്നു എന്നില്ലേ? തൊട്ടെ
പറഞ്ഞു.

" അവനെ വെള്ള .... "

* * *
"How did the priest kill the two demon 1s at once? XORcism" - Ashwani Anand, 2019
Cenotaph

Krishna

When your soul haunts you like a ghost,
And the heart is beating no more,
You scrounge for your last breath,
But the forms will leave you bleeding by the shore,
Death is still on a hunt,
Sniffing the scars in your mind,
You walk in shadows to hide from the ever hidden,
All it would take is a shunt down the horizon,
To ride on the land once forbidden.
Craven
Parasuram Venkatesh

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
Perusing ancient books and yawning, dreading cold of early morning
When I felt this strangeness dawning, sapping all of my vigour.
“Tis a passing fancy”, thought I, “that I must not keep in store—
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, vividly, I recall, it was past the time of fall,
And winter’s cold, dead, drawl signalled a parting, for evermore
of the child that would have gloated at infatuation bloated
From the man that would have doted hand and foot on lost Lenore.
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

Just then I could not ascertain the severity of this hurricane
That shook and broke my windowpane like nothing else before.
So that to restore my depleting confidence I sat repeating
“Tis just something small and fleeting that has plagued before—
Something small and fleeting that has plagued me before—
This it is and nothing more.

Truth be told it was apart from usual matters of the heart;
I grew distant from those around to dive into writing more.
From my hands then flowed the rhyme that altered my paradigm,
“Finite work in finite time” I thought, to shut for good the door.
And though I knew it would swing open I still shut the door;
To keep from wanting any more.
Deep into the abyss peering, at the edge and wondering, fearing
that it would look back at me and catch a glimpse of my eyes sore,
T’was then that I paused to question the true nature of my oppression
And acquiesced that my repression added against the score.
Sure of footing then I was free, an east wind blowing through the moor—
But just wind and nothing more.

For all the ones I walked among not one could hear the song I sung—
an anthem for the bottom rung while they couldn’t even see the floor.
Desolate yet all undaunted, enthralled, infatuated, and enchanted
By the vision I was granted of the top of the climb— Lenore.
The ladder beckoned me to climb faster to reach Lenore,
But rungs there were always more.

In defeat I stopped devising schemes and even improvising.
But still, oh so mesmerising was something about Lenore.
As my dreams lay dashed and broken, not a single word was spoken,
From my slumber I was woken, shaken to my very core.
The emptiness I felt was nothing like I had ever felt before,
And would feel nevermore.

Contrarily, my soul grew stronger, hesitating then no longer
In newfound talent I jotted down verses for Lenore.
I didn’t expect a kindly answer, and being not a graceful dancer,
Made no vain attempt to chance her, but wrote and sent her verses four.
Apprehension rose and fell like waves on Night’s Plutonian shore
For closure and nothing more.
The next day, a pleasant surprise, there was no resentment in her eyes,
   Yet I chose to reprise my absence from sight of Lenore.
But when I tried to take to the field, premonition refused to yield
   When I recalled what was revealed to her the night before.
   I hoped for a resolution like I never hoped before,
   But for it got nothing more.

Then later, I heard her call for me from across the hall
   And although I was in her thrall, I wondered foolishly,
   "What for?"— Out I walked without control, bursting into relaxing stroll
   My heart beating out my soul when at last I faced Lenore.
   Aglow with radiance of the sun newly risen was lovely Lenore—
   Forgotten now, nevermore.

My thoughts were a while convening, as I deciphered the meaning
   Of her gait and leaning and realised she quite enjoyed my work of lore.
So thankful was I to avert disaster, that briefly my thoughts flew past her
   Restoring me as rightful Master of all the memories I adore.
   With resolution came experience by which now I could set store;
   Priest wore black— nothing more.

But after all I bore no hate, though I refused to abnegate
   And that she didn’t reciprocate little relevancy bore
For after that I sat beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
   In a dreamless slumber whiling time away till half past four.
   Whiling time away till woken by alarms at half past four;
   Dreamless— for evermore.
A poem is a sudden outpour of emotion,
Its depth could be as vast as an ocean.

Or it could be something stupid and silly,
Describing just a little lotus or a lily.

A good poem may or may not rhyme,
But it could resonate through space and time.

A poem could be short, a poem could be long,
Or it could be verses, sung like a song.

A poem, I believe, is a divine creation,
Filled with the poet's emotions and passion.

Creation
Ashwin Bhaskar

deviantart.com/wayleri
Look Not at the Color
Mugdha Khedkar

Colors can be misleading, they are a reason for divide in perfect disguise.
Feel them close to your heart, don't see them with your eyes.
White can depict peace or the silent weeping, mourning for the dead.
Red can color your life with unconditional love or with bloodshed.
Black is the absence of light or a canvas against which other colors shine.

Blue is the feeling of grief and woes or the light of skyline.
The water we drink, the air we breathe have no color at all.
Without these colorless entities, we don't rise we just fall.
Under the variety of our skin colors, red blood flows through.
Over our head, the sky we look up to is painted with blue.

At night a black blanket wraps us up, irrespective of our skin tone.
Wrapped up in our blood, lies a uniformly white calciferous bone.
Look not at the color of the ink, feel the emotion. Appreciate the art.
Look not at the color of the skin, listen carefully to the whispers of the heart.
तब और अब
अश्नी आनन्द

इकहतर साल हुए,
उस रात को,
जब हम आजाद हुए,
अंग्रेजी से,उनकी गुलामी से,
अपने पहचान की गुमनामी से।

आजाद हुए,
कफी कुछ बदला,
नए लक्ष्य बने,
जैसे अपनी अच्छी जिंदगी और नए पड़ोसी से बदला।

अरमानों के नए फूल खिले,
इक्कियाह की नयी लड़ी बनी,
तो अपने नए नियम बने,
अपनी नयी सरकार मिली।

पर क्या सच में।
आजादी मिली?

तब कानून उनके थे,
सरकार उनकी थी,
और थी हमारी बस बेबसी।
तब वो हमारी चीख पर बहरे थे,
जखम देखकर अंधे थे,
और हमारे हाथ मजबूरि में बंधे थे।

तब खिलाफत से उठे सर कुचल दिए जाते,
हक माँगते हाथ मसल दिए जाते,
और हम हर रात और हम हर रात।
बस अच्छे दिन की आस लिये सो जाते।
तब हम गरीब नहीं थे..
बनाये गए थे,
हमें रोशनी होते हुए भी..
अंधेरे दिखाए गए थे,
और हम..
बस सिसकियों के साथ सहते गए थे।

तब औरतें महफूज़ नहीं थीं.
जीने से हमको डर लगता था,
हमें बॉटकर हम पर राज करने में,
उनका मन लगता था।

और अब..
अब भी शायद हालत वही हैं,
मजबूरी और बेबसी वहीं हैं
बदले तो सिर्फ "वो", "उन्हें", "उनके" के मायने हैं,
और हम आज भी उस गुलामी के आईने हैं।
बदला है तो "वो", "उन्हें", "उनके" का रंग,
पहले थे गोरे, आज हम में से ही थोड़े

रहेगा इंतजार मुझे उस पल का,
असल मायनों में हम आज़ाद होंगे जब,
फिलहाल समान हैं दोनों,
तब और अब।
Home
Ashwin Bhaskar

Home is the place where I enjoy the most,
My lovely family, about whom I can boast.

My friendly father - a great advisor,
An experienced grandpa, who proves to be wiser.

My dear mother, who is an abode of goodness,
A cute little sister, who gives me a feeling of completeness.

My encouraging grandma, full of inspiring ideas,
A grandma - sweet and caring, who helps get rid of my fears.

For me, my home is my family, a small yet great one!
Without speaking to them, my day is not done.
Two of a Kind
Ritam Raha

To the sister distance apart,
Yes, I do miss those days
those days of long talks
those days of melodiless singing;
I miss those afternoons,
when we came home together drenched in rain,
I miss those fights over nothing, all those arguments,
back then, how we together endured all the pain.

Remember all those lies we told our mom and dad,
and how we used to blackmail each other with them,
I miss those white lies you know!
Sometimes I wish things were just like the same.

Sometimes there are things in my life
only you will understand,
Birthdays – phone, whatsapp, paper wishes
remind me more of the cake from your hand!

You are like the wind from yesterday,
I know, all the time you are there for me,
But today I wish to feel the chill I used to,
the chill that used to lit my face up with glee.
I am the luckiest brother in the world,
I have the best friend, a guide, a sister like you.

Distance can’t set our souls apart,
I will be always there for you.
The Lost Sunsets

Mugdha Khedkar

(I recently shifted from Mumbai to Chennai. Here is an ode to sunsets over the sea that I miss a lot.)

As the sand sparkles,  
The massive waves roar.  
I am left with a feeling,  
Of wanting something more.

The day doesn’t end with  
The sun making a fall.  
But it begins as the sea  
Spits out the fire ball.

Beyond the horizon,  
Above the sea.  
The breeze brings,  
A single question to me.

“We begin the day for you”  
The waves sing in chorus.  
“If we can’t see it end someone  
Somewhere will see it for us.”

“What is missing?”  
A bright golden glow,  
That paints the sky  
Red nice and slow.

My home misses sunrises  
Over the roaring sea.  
Here I miss the quiet sunsets  
With a cup of coffee.

Agreeing with me,  
The waves roar higher.  
They miss swallowing,  
The ball of fire.

I feel close to my family,  
Though I am on my own.  
The sun I see rising,  
Will set at my home.
एक नया जज्बा,
शायद इसी चीज़ की कभी थी,
कामयाबी हासिल करने मे।

कामयाबी का इतना गुरूर छा गया कि
मानो दुनिया से रिश्ता ही दूट गया,
और फिर एक पल रुकने पर
मुड़कर देखा तो,
सारा जहाँ हमारे पैरे तले रंगते
हुए आगे निकल गया।

अभी फिर वही नाकामियाबी है
फिर वही ढोकरें हैं,
फिर वही घाव हैं,
बस शहर है तो एक उस जज्बे की,
उस हौसलाअफ़ज़ाई की जो इस मुदे मे
फिर एक दफ़ा जान पूँक दे!
Quatrains for a Score
Parasuram Venkatesh

Dawn's birds on winter wood
Sing hopeful songs on a dismal day.
If I could keep it all I would,
But what is life if not disarray?

The world is for us to discover,
Adopting uncertain means to ends,
And with foe or friend or lover,
It is for us to make amends.

Could I have made the leap were I fitter?
Joy and bliss, could I have found?
I'll let truth be be the arbiter
And float, like a feather to the ground.

If you try to sail the seas
To escape the vicissitudes of time,
Haunting come back the memories
Of your teenage paradigm.

So we tell ourselves these tales,
Prosaic or in vivacious verse;
Biting down on our fingernails,
From the cradle to the hearse.
EVENTS @ CMI

"Beta, sweater pehno" - Swarathma, 2018
Haiku Workshop

On November 3rd 2018, the Literature Club organised a Haiku workshop in the CMI campus. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce participants to the practice of Haiku, which is a short Japanese poem written with seventeen syllables and three verses. Haiku is a popular Japanese form of poetry that has etched its presence in English.

The facilitator for the day was Ms. Geethanjali Rajan. Ms. Rajan teaches Japanese and English in Chennai, India. Her poems have appeared in many journals - World Haiku Review, Chrysanthemum, A Hundred Gourds, Under the Basho and some others. Some of her haiku have been translated into German, Punjabi, Hindi and Japanese. She is the recipient of awards like Redleaf Poetry India Award 2013 (haiku), an Honourable Mention in the Genjuan International haibun Competition 2014 and 2016, the second place (haiku) at the Tata Lit Live, 2014 and many more. She is currently the haiku editor at cattails (UHTS).
The workshop was organised in two sessions. It began with an in-depth discussion about the syntactic aspects of Haiku. The birth of Haiku and its gradual popularity in other languages throughout the world was discussed next. Some sample haikus by famous haiku masters like Matsuo Basho and Kobayashi Issa were presented by Ms. Rajan. Other Japanese forms of poetry like senryu, tanka, haibun were explored with concrete examples of each.

The next session comprised of participants trying their hand at writing their first haikus. These haikus were then presented and discussed. The presented haikus were analysed and improved based on the following aspects:

1) The haikus should adhere to the syntactic specifications – three lines, lengths of which should be short, long and short.
2) They should have an explicit kireji (cut).
3) They should have some indirect reference to nature or seasons.
4) They should be simple and direct. Usage of metaphors and similes is discouraged in haikus.

After the writing session, Ms. Rajan presented some of her own haikus. With this, the interactive session with an enthusiastic audience came to an end.
stinging cold—
perched on a ledge
between mountains

- Kushpreet Singh

first rains—
suddenly disturbed—
by petrichor

- Mugdha Khedkar

a golden peak
amidst mountains at sunrise—
treacherous path

- Ananth

words flowing
faster than the wind
gentler than breeze

- Ashwin Bhaskar

waiting for the sun
on his darkest night—
fireflies

- Aditya Raut

valley of darkness—
leading the way
fireflies

- Trina De

foggy morning—
their deaths reside
behind the smog

- Ashwani Anand
winding roads
take me up to the temple—
snowfall

- Kushpreet Singh

a wizened toad
on the wet grass —
awaiting doom

- Ananth

stormy rains
a cup of hot coffee
a blanket and book

- Ekanshdeep Gupta

hailstones instead of
raindrops killing crops making
grass white for an hour

- Parusuram Venkatesh

sit on a train track
wait for Raavan to be burnt
get hit by a train

- Sricharan

I ask
and I ask some more—
nothing yields

- Trina De

cold winds—
hundreds of rituals
and smiles

- Ashwani Anand
(about Chhath puja)
pounding heat –
sweat on my forehead I yell
school is over!

- Rahul Raphael Kanekar

an apparition of water
marks the blinding tyranny
of the unwavering sun

- Ananth

monsoon winds
carry my paper boat
in a pond

- Kushpreet Singh

fast melting –
hailstones can’t be thrown
but can be sat on

- Parasuram Venkatesh

at the seashore
awaiting a sunrise–
only grey clouds

- Mugdha Khedkar

In the shadows
from animosity towards demons
Nightcrawler hides

- Aditya Raut

stormy night –
a battleship sinking
on the canvas

- Sriram
Sanskrit Divas
-Ashwin Bhaskar

On 27th August 2018, CMI celebrated Sanskrit Divas for the very first time. Sanskrit-enthusiast CMI students had gathered, and they were in for a pleasant surprise when they realized that Prof. S P Suresh had also turned up to grace the occasion.

The event started off with a beautiful invocatory verse to Goddess Sarasvati by Ashwani Anand. It was a beautiful verse, set to tune, that praises the Goddess and requests her to provide us with knowledge and good intellect.

Following this, we had a wonderful power point presentation by Aparna Shankar which transported the audience to the world of Sanskrit riddles. Being a Sanskrit scholar himself, Prof. Suresh, despite knowing the answers to many of these questions, chose to remain silent, and let the others answer. The audience indeed had a fun time in trying to decode the puzzles. Even those who were not proficient in Sanskrit were mesmerized by the answers and were able to appreciate the latent beauty. Many funny and witty verses by the great Sanskrit poet, Kalidasa, were also looked at. The well-designed slides, made the presentation even more memorable and enjoyable.

We next had Maitreyi Vijay who rendered a very meaningful and rare Carnatic kriti 'Shaileshvaram Bhajare' in the Sumadyuti raaga, composed by Muthuswamy Dikshitar. The kriti is an invocation to both Lord Shiva (Shaileshvara) and Vishnu (Vaarana Shaileshvara), at the same time. The rendition was indeed a treat to the ears. Maitreyi also went on to explain the meaning and the significance of the kriti. Not only is this kriti a symbol of the oneness of Shiva and Vishnu, but the beauty of Sanskrit verses with multiple meanings was also reflected in the kriti.

Next we had a presentation by Ashwin Bhaskar illustrating the world of Sanskrit poetry. It started with an introduction to the history of Sanskrit literature, in general. Introducing some of the greatest and oldest Sanskrit poets ever (like Kalidasa, Bharavi, Dandi and Magha), he moved on to explore the captivating area of Sanskrit poetry known as Chitra Kavya (poetry with imagery). With the aid of picturesque slides created by Ashwani Anand, Chitra Kavyas composed by some of the previously mentioned poets were looked at. Beautiful verses that resembled Gomutrika (zigzag pattern), verses shaped like the strings on a Mridanga, verses with a single word having multiple meanings in various contexts, verses formed using a single consonant, etc. were experienced visually. Then moving on to some later age poets, such as Swami Vedanta Deshika, Venkatadhvari Kavi, Narayana Bhattachiri, verses with even more complicated patterns such as horse-hoof, wheel with spokes, 8-petalled lotus, etc. were seen. Verses which praised Lord Rama when read from left to right and Lord Krishna when read in reverse, were recited. The climax of the talk was the pair of verses by Swami Deshika which when placed on the squares of a chessboard, solved the Knight's tour problem.

Last, but one of the best, was a very innovative attempt by Souvik Parial at rekindling the lost interest in the culturally rich Sanskrit language, by showcasing how Sanskrit literature proves to flourish even in the modern generation, in the form of meaningful, yet soulful translations of Bollywood songs. He rendered a very nice translation of the famous popular song 'Dheere dheere se' into Sanskrit. This translation has been done by a Sanskrit scholar of the modern times, Pankaj Jha with an aim to prove that Sanskrit is not just a thing of the past.

The event came to an end with this musical treat. Everyone left the hall with an enhanced enthusiasm and passion to learn this mesmerizing language.

Dhanyavaadah!
Book Discussions 2018-19

The following book discussions were held till February 2019:

1) Malathi Velamuri discussed Earnest J. Gaines' 'A Lesson Before Dying' on 26th February.

2) Aalok Thakkar discussed William Dalrymple's 'City of Djinns' on 27th March.


4) Usha Mahadevan discussed Andrea Levy’s 'Small Island' on 14th September.

5) Shiva Shankar discussed Om Prakash Valmiki's 'Joothan' on 5th October.

6) Malathi Velamuri discussed Margaret Atwood's 'The Handmaid's Tale' on 8th October.

7) R. Sridharan discussed Thornton Wilder's 'The Bridge of San Luis Rey' on 29th October.

8) Nikhil Kalyanapuram discussed Haruki Murakami's 'Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage' on 16th November.

9) Aparna Shankar discussed three short stories of J.D. Salinger: 'A Perfect day for Bananafish', 'The Laughing Man' and 'For Esme—with Love and Squalor' on 16th November.

10) Parasuram Venkatesh discussed Von Mises' 'Human Action' on 24th January.

11) Ankita Sarkar discussed George Orwell's '1984' on 14th February.
Free writing session

In one of our Literature club meetings, we were given the above picture prompt, and we had to write what came to our mind. Time limit: 30 mins!

The results were facinating and we present two of the gems produced that evening.
A House on a Fish

Rahul Kanekar

Who builds a house on a fish? And it's not even a house. It looks like a village. So someone went and built a village on top of a fish. The first thing that pops up in my unartistic mind is, no way you could do that. Impossible. But seeing as this is a writing session and nothing else is occurring to me, I'll play along.

Suppose you did have to build a village on a fish. Never mind a village, suppose you had to build a house on top of a fish. First and foremost, you would need that fish to be asleep. And that too for a long time. I would say at least two months. Because if not, it's going to wake up some time, move one of those giant fins and before you know it, you are skydiving without a parachute.

So naturally we're talking about sedatives. Enough sedatives to make it sleep for two months. Of course the fish won't be in the best of health after this. But given that we're trying to build a house on a fish, we don't seem to be too concerned about it's health anyway. So we can let that slide.

How much sedative do you need?
Let's make some calculations.
This seems to be a matter of weight. One paracetomol makes me drowsy in about 15 minutes, but not enough to knock me out. You would probably need about ten to do that. So ten to knock me out for a couple of hours. We can extrapolate from that. Assuming our house is as big as this room, we need the back of the fish to fit at least one more room each way to provide a decent foundation. So that's nine rooms. Given that our structure is on slightly unstable ground, we probably need to dig as deep as the height of this room. So that 10 feet. This room could fit about sixty of me standing. But since we are talking about volume, we are allowed to place my body horizontally and stack one on top of the other as well. That should give us another sixty at the very least. So that a hundred and twenty. So we have 9 x 120 = 1080. 1080 of me would need 10 paracetomol each to be put asleep for two hours. So that 10800 paracetomol for two hours. Two months has sixty day in it, each twenty four hours, that's 1440 hours. Dividing by two gives us 720. So 720 x 10800 = 7776000 paracetomol. Phew.

Presumably we are going to make a solution of sedatives equal in strength to 7776000 paracetomol and inject it into a vein of the fish (Why a vein? Because veins carry blood to the heart and arteries carry blood away from it. That's biology). Injecting means we are going to need some sort of syringe. A syringe strong enough to pierce through the thick hide of that fish. Of course we also need to have a pump to inject the solution into the body of the fish. But that is probably the most minor problem in this endeavour. Also since you have a huge syringe and pump to go with it you'll need a big platform and a crane of some sort that will allow us to manoeuvre this contraption.
Some additional problems:

1. Of course we are not actually going to use 7776000 paracetomol. It's more likely going to be a much stronger sedative so that we don't require as much. However, we will have to adjust for the shipments that are undoubtedly going to 'go missing'.
2. The mind boggles at the sort of gymnastics anyone living in this house will have to do to stand up straight once the fish wakes up and starts moving around.
3. Some sort of clerical staff will be needed to deal with the thousands of complaints that we will receive that go along the lines of “Why the hell are you doing this?!”.

Half an hour is almost up so I need to conclude.

Building a house on top of a fish assuming a big enough fish exists seems to be a project plagued with logistical issues. Mankind would be better off continuing to build and improve the designs of structures on land where they have stood since the beginning. People would be better advised to put in some of the effort into making sure monstrosities like Antilla are not created again. The artist who drew this particular painting seems to be completely detached from reality. Also, no lake is shaped like a bowl. What kind of ridiculous painting is this?
Life on Death
Mugdha Khedkar

We will create a home above the mighty sea.
In the midst of lush green our beautiful abode will be.

We will live in solitude - a fairy tale come to reality.
We will climb the tall hills, swim the depths of the sea.

With hair dripping wet, you will return with a horrified face blush red.
Shivering, not due to the water but the hot sweat on your forehead.

When you decide to speak, with quivering lips you will say,
"I wish I hadn't lived to see this day."

To create an abode of our undying love we killed them in their own home.
To make sure you and I are together we made them rest all alone.

We, being human, created our heaven building over their broken shards,
If their carcasses could speak, they would say
"Your temple of love is our graveyard."
PHOTOGRAPHY

"Kisi ko chai peena hai kya?"  Soham Chakraborty, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
Trip to Sandakphu
Kushpreet Singh

The CMI travel and photography club organised a trek to Sandakphu, West Bengal last December. Located at a height of 3600 mt, Sandakphu is the highest point in West Bengal. The trek along the Singalila Ridge to Sandakphu and Phalut is one of the most popular ones in the Eastern Himalayas due to the grand vistas of the Kangchenjunga range and the Everest range which can be seen from the ridge.

Tonglu, which is a 4 hour drive from NJP, was the starting point of the trek. The temperature dropped steadily until it was near zero at Tonglu. The cold was intimidating but we still went out at night to take pictures of the Milky Way!

We started early the next morning and reached Kalipokhri by dusk. Sandakphu, the highest point of this trek, was a steep 7km climb from Kalipokhri. This part of the trek was definitely not easy due to the steep climb and our 10 kg backpacks. But what awaited us at Sandakphu top was well worth the effort. The next morning we watched the sun rise over Kanchenjunga! Four of the five highest peaks in the world, Everest, Kangchenjunga, Lhotse and Makalu were stretched over the horizon right in front of us.
From Sandakphu we trekked for 15kms to Molley. We were lucky enough to witness the season’s first snowfall on the way.

The next day we covered another 15kms and reached Gorkhey. The first thing we did in Gorkhey was to take a bath (after 4 days!) in ice cold water. We took a taxi to Darjeeling which was the final stop of our trip. In Darjeeling we finally had amazing food and warm beds to sleep after surviving on maggi, tea and grossly overprised daal chawal throughout the trek. All in all it was quite a memorable experience and we are planning to organize more trips like this in the near future.
Sandakphu Trip

Castle of Glass (Key Monastery, Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh)

He and I (Langza, Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh)

Backdrop, Jawdrop! (Tonglu, West Bengal)

Canvas of Nature (Mud Village, Himachal Pradesh)

Another Dusk (Losar, Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh)
Sandakphu Trip

- It was all Yellow (Kaza, Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh)
- I go on Forever (Gorkhey, West Bengal)
- Let it Be (Molley, West Bengal)
- Highway to Hell (Tumling, Nepal)
- His Majesty (The Everest Range from Sandakphu, West Bengal)
Sandakphu Trip

We are the Champions (Sabargram, Nepal)

The Sleeping Buddha Awakes (Kanchenjunga Range)

Starry Starry Night (Chitkul, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh)

The Long and Winding Road (Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh)

Splash of Life (Losar, Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh)
Tessellate'19

Swarathma: Fusion Night

The Drama

Soundscape

A. Kanyakumari: Carnatic Night

Indus Creed: Rock Night
Tessellate'19

Virgil D'Sami: Guest Talk

K. Srilata: Guest Talk

Quiz by Major Chandrakant Nair

Dr. V. Santha: Guest Talk

Dr. K. M. Cherian: Guest Talk
Tessellate’19

The Tessellate Chess Open

Drone Workshop by Skylark Drones

The FIFA tournament

Karaoke Night

Tessellate ’19 Cube Open
Tessellate’19

Let’s Tessellate

Decorations

Pixellate Moments

Auditorium Foyer and Pixellate

Enthusiasm: Game on
"Aap log kapdey dhote hain? :-)")" - Rajeshwari Nair, 2019
(on fading of colours on Tessellate T-shirts on washing)
Watts talks about the disease of dualism: of thinking the mind and body separate, of trying to break continuous reality into separate manageable pieces. Could it be that there exist medicines to kickstart a release from this? His answer: Hallucinogens. ("... an astonishingly inaccurate term, since they cause one neither to hear voices nor to see visions such as might be confused with physical reality. While they do indeed produce the most complex and very obviously "hallucinatory" patterns before closed eyes, their general effect is to sharpen the senses to a supernormal degree of awareness.")

But isn't it sacrilege to mess with the mind? Here's another excerpt:

"There is no difference in principle between sharpening perception with an external instrument, such as a microscope, and sharpening it with an internal instrument, such as one of [psilocybin, LSD, DMT]. If they are an affront to the dignity of the mind, the microscope is an affront to the dignity of the eye and the telephone to the dignity of the ear." Very rarely do you come across clarity in a subject so inherently murky, and Watts is top notch and entirely free of mystical bullshit.
Book: Tuesdays with Morrie
Author: Mitch Albom
Reviewer: Mugdha Khedkar

This is a beautiful story of how the author Mitch meets his college professor (Morrie) after 20 to 30 long years and spends almost every Tuesday afternoon conversing with him. Morrie is suffering from ALS and doesn't have long to live. In such a situation, these meetings with Mitch are something Morrie looks forward to every week. Their conversations range from philosophy to everyday life to the sensitive issue of death. It is heartwarming to see a new relationship develop between the two which leads to a huge void in Mitch's heart when Morrie says his final goodbye.
Book: Salvation of a Saint
Author: Keigo Higashino
Reviewer: Trina De

This story revolves around the investigation of a murder. Yoshitaka Mashiba, an elite Japanese gentleman is murdered in his home and there is no trace of anyone even having been in the house at the time except for one extra coffee mug in the sink. A beautiful thing about the story is that it goes against all standards of a murder investigation. A tight suspect pool? A motive? An opportunity? It’s all right there. It would deally be what a lazy middle-aged inspector like Kusanagi and would want to be assigned. Yet it manages to keep you hooked right up to the end. If you like proving stuff on paper, try this one for a change.

As we go through the investigation, layers are peeled apart and things complicate. The characters themselves perceive and interpret the happenings in way that speaks volumes about their personalities. As you get more information, the perplexity mounts as well because ideas contradict each other, which makes the end of things all the more harmonious. Each of those contradictions have an explanation you couldn’t have thought of on your own. It leaves even Manabu Yukawa, a physics prodigy and Kusanagi’s old colleague who he turns to for help, baffled for the most part. This is also an interesting read for those who are interested in gender differences. It’s an exemplary work on human instincts. I’m better for having read it.
Book : Ponniyin Selvan
Author : Kalki Krishnamurthy
Reviewer : Aparna Shankar

Ponniyin Selvan is a historical fiction novel set in the 10th century AD in the Chola kingdom. The characters are many but memorable, including several strong and complex women. There are evocative descriptions of the rich fields and grand palaces, yet the story is a racy page-turner and keeps you guessing till the end (and beyond!) The major events and characters are based in history, but the author does take several liberties. Multiple English translations of the Tamil original exist.
Book: City of Thieves
Author: David Benioff
Reviewer: Kushpreet Singh

Set in Leningrad during the Second World War, this book follows the absurd adventure of two youths as they search for a dozen eggs. In a starving city where cannibalism is rampant, this coming of age story offers a view into the lives of the Russian people during the 900 day siege. The two main characters couldn't have more contrasting personalities. Lev is a typical introverted chess geek where Kolya is a blonde, handsome cossack who teaches Lev the way of the world. Lev's pessimism is balanced by Kolya's unyielding optimism. A tale of brotherhood in the time of war, its a poignant reminder of how much the Russians sacrificed for their victory. This story is depicts war in all its colors. Funny, thought-provoking, violent, shocking; a must read for history buffs.
After nearly two years, I'm finally done reading Human Action cover to cover (metaphorically, that is; I've been using an ebook). It's easily one of the most important economic works of the past century, and so of course not many people have heard of it. I'll leave the ominous closing lines here:

"The body of economic knowledge is an essential element in the structure of human civilization; it is the foundation upon which modern industrialism and all the moral, intellectual, technological, and therapeutical achievements of the last centuries have been built. It rests with men whether they will make the proper use of the rich treasure with which this knowledge provides them or whether they will leave it unused. But if they fail to take the best advantage of it and disregard its teachings and warnings, they will not annul economics; they will stamp out society and the human race."
This book is categorized as non-fiction but it is written like a story. The prose is beautiful. It depicts how cancer has been a part of our society since time immemorial. Cancer diagnosis is considered a death sentence. From the ancient Egyptian healer who writes “Cure; there is none” to modern medicine still struggling to increase cancer survival rate. Cancer is hard to fight because cancer is made of us. The normal process of cell division gone haywire. The book gives detailed accounts of the quest to cure cancer, the people involved including famous patients whose illness and death became lessons in medical history and how cancer seems to evade everything thrown at it and still remains an enigma. The author gives accounts of patients he has treated himself. Some of them died before the publication of his book. This book is about cancer and how it affects people. How serendipity led to the discovery of chemotherapy which saved millions of children from Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Some stories in this book will make you laugh, some will make you cry but in the end you will emerge with greater empathy with people whose lives have been affected by this king of all diseases! One of the best books I've ever read. Period!
The Magazine Team

Guidance:
Usha Mahadevan
Rajeshwari Nair

Editor-In-Chief:
Parasuram Venkatesh

Design:
Aswannth
Ashwani Anand

Editors:
Mugdha Khedkar
Sriram Akella
Rahul Kanekar
Ashwin Bhaskar

Photographs:
CMI Photography Club

Front Pages:
starline@freepik
Pranay Agrawal