

Literature | Interview

An International Magazine



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Panache

Magazine

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Guest of the Month

Ms. Kshama Urmila

A Symphony of color,
words and motion

CHIEF EDITOR:
AKANKSHA SHRIVASTAVA
AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE



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Preface

"Panache" is not just a name. It is a basic value of our "Aadhya Publishing House" as we believe talent should never die. Rather it should always stand out like the feathered plume on a helmet to attract the world and that is what Panache means. We, as the Publisher, believe in encouraging new talent in the field of literature. We want each and every poet to get the opportunity to express themselves and get the proper acknowledge that they deserve. They should be known by the world for their views and we hope very soon we shall be able to achieve this.

Panache is a monthly international magazine in the English Language, that is released on digital platforms for literature lovers.

However, our work does not end here. I, Akanksha Shrivastava, Publisher and Chief Editor of Aadhya Publishing house, am trying to put a smile on the faces of poor children by providing them with food on behalf of our publishing house. By taking this small initiative, it is our wish to fulfill this basic need of food so that we help the children to survive in a better way.



AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE

PRESENTS

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Panache is a monthly magazine which is published by **AADHYA PUBLISHING HOUSE**. In this magazine we encourage new poets and writers by publishing their writings. Every month we offer a competition in which poets and writers can take part by registering themselves. The registered participants send their writings along with their name , photograph and phone number. The magazine will be launched on our facebook page on 1st day of every month. After the launch of magazine every registered writer will get the pdf of the magazine. Out of all the registered participants we ask every writer for their top 5 choices. And then we promote our writers on our social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter . This “**Panache**” will definitely be the attraction of literature and also the rise of every poet...



Akanksha Shrivastava
Publisher & Chief Editor

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INTERVIEW

with the one and only

Ms. Kshama Urmila

1. Early Life and Inspirations

What was your childhood like, and when did your interest in art first begin to blossom? And How did your parents influence your artistic journey?

My childhood was like a quiet, hidden flower—delicate, unnoticed by many, yet full of silent beauty. While I grew up among five siblings, I was the quietest—often found in corners, drawing, sculpting, or talking to trees. I had few friends, but colors, clay, and my imagination became my closest companions.

My mother, full of warmth and strength, noticed this early and filled my world with crayons and encouragement. Even in times of illness and weakness, she never let my spirit fade. It was around sixth or seventh grade that I truly recognized art as my voice. The joy people felt when they saw my work pulled me deeper into this creative world.

My first exhibition happened quietly—I gave an interview and returned home without a word. The next morning, I woke up to see myself on television and in newspapers. That recognition felt like the world had finally seen the hidden child. From there, the journey continued.

A seminar on child labor once moved me deeply, leading to a second exhibition born out of raw emotion and compassion. I painted 25 canvases in days, and when they were displayed, the appreciation I received felt like a warm embrace.

Art, for me, wasn't just a hobby—it became my way of being seen, of healing, and of blooming into the world.

Would you like me to format this as part of a feature article or keep refining further for your magazine layout?

Is there a special meaning or story behind your name “Kshama Urmila”?

Like a seed turns into a tree through an unseen magic — that magic in my life has always been my mother. She was the embodiment of strength, resilience, and grace. More than just a parent, she was my soul's compass, my silent strength, and my lifelong role model.

A year before she passed away, with her blessing, I chose to carry her name. While officially I am Kshama Kulshrestha, in spirit and truth, I am Kshama Urmila. Everything beautiful, compassionate, and enduring within me is born of her. Take 'Urmila' away from me, and 'Kshama' would simply cease to exist.



INTERVIEW

with the one and only

Ms. Kshama Urmila

2. Education and Artistic Development

You are a painter, sculptor, animator, poet, and designer. Which of these art forms is closest to your heart, and why? How do you experience the contrast between working with traditional mediums like terracotta and digital platforms like animation and graphic design?

Art has always been my passion—whether it's painting, sculpting, writing, or animation. A senior once said something that stayed with me: "Art is like a tree—it has many branches." That's exactly how I see my creative journey. Every form is connected, just expressed differently.

After a serious accident left me bedridden for 15 months, it was art—through books and writing—that gave me strength. Even in pain, I never left my creative path. When I decided to learn animation, people asked how long it would take me. But I've always loved learning. I welcomed the challenge, because for me, every new form of art is an extension of expression.

Whether it's terracotta, traditional painting, or digital design—they may seem different from the outside, but at heart, they're the same: a language of emotion. I believe nothing is truly hard or easy; it depends on how deeply you understand it.

Yes, the world sometimes tries to pull you down. But I've learned—if you keep moving forward, with love for what you do, the path reveals itself. And I'll keep walking it, always curious, always learning.



INTERVIEW

with the one and only

Ms. Kshama Urmila



2. Education and Artistic Development

You hold a Master's degree in Fine Arts —what were some defining experiences during your academic journey?

I completed my Bachelors and Masters in Fine Art. After my 12th, I met with an accident that forced me to withdraw my admission from Jabalpur College. Due to my health, I pursued my degrees from Bhopal, as I was too weak to attend regular classes.

Though I never experienced a typical college life, my love for Fine Art never took a backseat.

Can you share a moment from your student life that deeply impacted your perspective on art?

One of my seniors once told me that an artist sees the world differently—that their vision holds a certain uniqueness others often miss. For an artist, the white canvas isn't just a surface; it's an entire universe where imagination, knowledge, emotions, and unspoken thoughts come to life through colors.

There are two kinds of art: realistic and abstract. While realistic art replicates what already exists, abstract art emerges from within—it is the language of the soul. For me, abstract art holds a deeper power. It doesn't follow form; it follows feeling. It gives me the freedom to express my truest self—not through replication, but through raw, unfiltered emotion. That's where I feel most honest, most alive.



INTERVIEW

with the one and only

Ms. Kshama Urmila

3. The Journey of Pink Flower Studio

What inspired you to establish ‘Pink Flower Studio’? What types of creative activities and projects are nurtured through the studio?

Before, I used to create under the name Bitty’s Creations, but after my mother left this world, something shifted within me. On her first birthday after she passed—22nd May—Pink Flower Studio was born. It wasn’t just a name; it was a tribute.

I always called her my Pink Flower. After a long day of hard work, her cheeks would flush like soft petals—radiant, full of life, gentle yet strong. That delicate bloom became a symbol of everything she was to me: grace, resilience, and quiet beauty.

Now, every creation that emerges from Pink Flower Studio carries her spirit. Whether it’s a sculpture, a painting, a poem, or an animation—each piece flows from that same love. She may no longer walk beside me, but she breathes through every brushstroke, every line, every idea. This studio is not just my workspace—it is where her soul lives on, blooming through my art.

4. Awards and Achievements

Tell us about the animated short film *The Pupa and Angelina*, which won international awards—how was the concept born?

The Pupa and Angelina was born from a deep concern I felt for children burdened by the pressure to be perfect—in academics, sports, and every aspect of life. Many of them suffer in silence, and some even take extreme steps to escape that pressure. I wanted to give voice to their struggle through this film.

My mother, who always believed in my art, asked me to release it. After she passed away, I released the film on her first birthday, as a tribute. It was received with immense love and went on to win three awards—including one from Bollywood and another from Haryana. For me, it wasn’t just a film; it was a message from the heart, guided by her blessing.



INTERVIEW

with the one and only

Ms. Kshama Urmila



Your masterpiece Adbhut made it to the Limca Book of Records. What was the inspiration behind that painting?

During a difficult phase when I was unwell and confined to bed, I began to dream of Lord Ganesha in countless, vivid forms. Each vision felt divine—full of color, form, and energy. My mother and sister believed these dreams were a blessing, a sign that needed to be expressed through art. They lovingly encouraged me to bring those visions to life.

Over the course of a year, I created a single painting depicting 1,248 unique forms of Lord Ganesha, using 4,215 different color shades—without repeating a single one. It was an intense, meditative process, and I poured every bit of myself into it. That painting became more than just art—it became my prayer, my strength, my offering.

A friend submitted it to the Guinness Book of Records. Though it wasn't accepted there, it was honored by the Limca Book of Records, which was a moment of deep gratitude. But beyond recognition, I believe this creation was Lord Ganesha's blessing—a sacred gift—and remains the greatest masterpiece of my life.

How do you recall the moment of receiving appreciation from Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for your artwork and poem on Wings of Fire?

Meeting Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was a moment carved in gold—etched forever in the diary of my soul. During a time when I was bedridden, it was through words that I found my wings. Two guiding flames lit my path: the wisdom of Swami Vivekananda and Wings of Fire by Dr. Kalam. That fire within me gave birth to a poem—an offering straight from the heart.

When I had the chance to meet him, I placed that poem and a hand-drawn portrait into his hands. He smiled—warmly, kindly—and praised my work. We shared laughter, photographs, and a presence that I will carry with me always.

That meeting wasn't just an event; it was a sacred moment. It felt like inspiration had come full circle—when a seeker met her source, and a blessing was silently passed from one heart to another.



INTERVIEW

with the one and only

Ms. Kshama Urmila

5. Poetic and Literary Expression

What inspires your poetry? Are your poems often reflections of personal experiences?

While I was bedridden, writing became second nature to me—like an extension of my breath. It wasn't just a way to pass time; it was how I stayed alive, emotionally and spiritually. The more I read, the more words poured out of me—songs, verses, and over 25 ghazals, each carrying a piece of my soul.

One of the most heartfelt things I've written is my mother's autobiography, which is soon to be released. Every word in it is a tribute, a reflection of her strength and the life she lived so beautifully.

For me, learning is a lifelong rhythm—it must flow like a river, endlessly, without pause. Whether through words or colors, I believe creation and learning should never stop. They are the breath of the soul.

6. Exhibitions and Public Display

What has been your experience presenting your work in solo and group exhibitions?

So far, I've had the privilege of presenting my work in 16 to 17 solo exhibitions and participating in nearly 25 group exhibitions. My artistic journey has taken me from the heart of Bhopal and Delhi to international platforms, including London and Dubai—twice in each city.

One of the most humbling moments has been seeing my paintings featured at the World Art Festival in Dubai, where they were even selected for auction. Each exhibition, whether local or global, has been a step forward in sharing my soul with the world—through color, form, and emotion.



INTERVIEW

with the one and only *Ms. Kshama Urmila*



How does it feel to represent Indian art on international platforms?

Breaking into the international world of art and literature is no easy journey—only a few ever rise to that stage, and fewer still stay. When I first showcased my work internationally, it felt surreal—a moment filled with goosebumps, silence, and a deep sense of arrival. But behind that moment were years of quiet struggle—sleepless nights, unseen tears, and relentless dedication. It wasn't an easy path, but every drop of sweat, every challenge endured, was worth the dream. That first step onto the global stage wasn't just a professional milestone—it was a personal victory, a moment where perseverance met purpose.

7. Womanhood and Creativity

As a woman artist, what challenges and opportunities have you encountered in your journey?

Yes, as a woman and someone physically challenged, I've encountered many limitations—places I couldn't reach, art forms I had to let go of, and moments when solo travel felt unsafe or impossible. There were times when the world seemed to shrink around me.

But through it all, my mother stood like a pillar—never letting me collapse. Her strength became mine. She reminded me that even when some doors close, life finds quiet ways to open new ones.

For every opportunity I missed, life gently placed another in my path—sometimes greater, sometimes unexpected, but always meaningful. And that's what kept me going.

INTERVIEW

with the one and only *Ms. Kshama Urmila*



How do awards like Daughters' Pride and Bhaskar Woman of the Year influence your sense of purpose and responsibility?

As a woman and an artist, I believe it is my deep responsibility to reflect the truth through my art. Art should not merely exist to decorate—it must ignite hope, raise meaningful questions, and shed light on issues often left in the shadows.

While I never want my work to spread negativity, I do want it to stir thought, evoke empathy, and inspire dialogue. Just as a pen holds the power to shape minds, an artist's brush carries the strength to move hearts—and sometimes even shift society. That, to me, is the silent power of art.

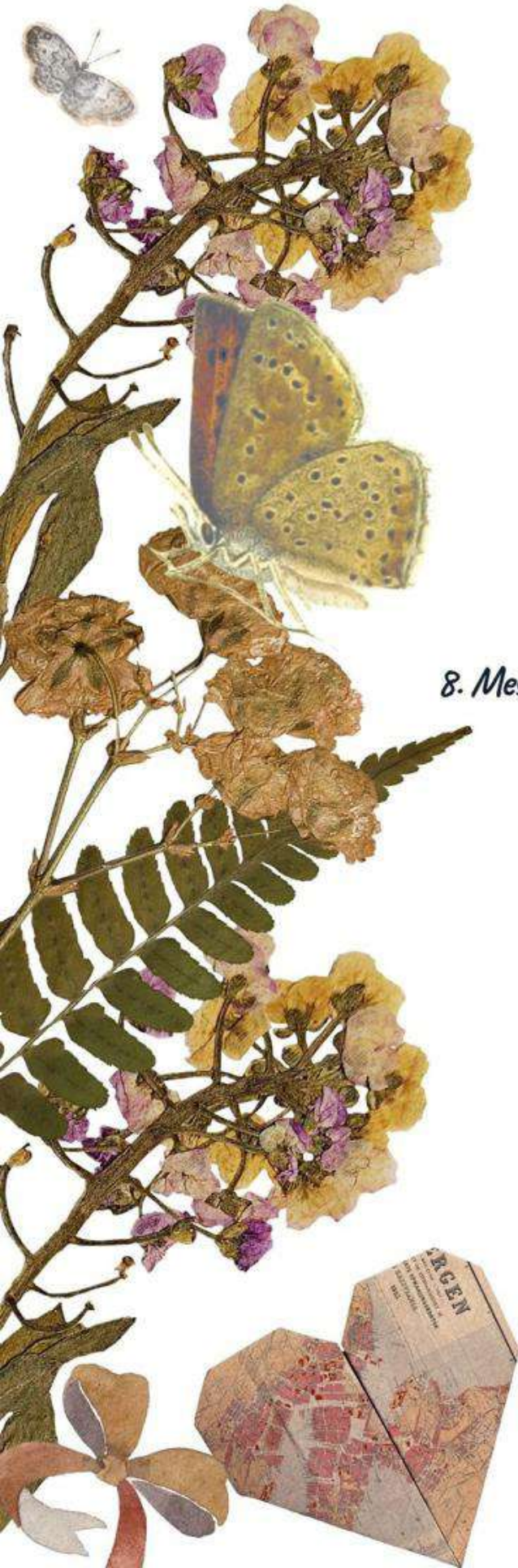
8. Message for Youth and Society

What advice would you give to young individuals who wish to pursue a career in creative arts?

My advice to young people is simple, yet powerful: don't rush. Sit with yourself in silence, reflect deeply, and truly listen to what your mind and body are trying to tell you. Your path reveals itself not in noise, but in stillness.

Once you discover what truly calls you, commit to it wholeheartedly—give it your 100%. Today, I see many young artists chasing reels, likes, and followers. But the real magic lies in nurturing your craft. When you focus on building your skills, success and money will naturally follow.

Above all, keep your inner spark alive. Never stop learning—because learning not only brings growth and success, it brings peace. And peace is the most beautiful form of achievement.



INTERVIEW

with the one and only

Ms. Kshama Urmila

In your view, what is the most powerful way to use art in the service of society?

I don't believe any one art form is superior to another when it comes to social service—each has its own strength. But in today's world, cinema stands out as the most powerful. It brings together multiple disciplines—painting, music, dance, acting, storytelling—creating a complete sensory and emotional experience.

Sometimes, even a two-hour film might fail to leave a mark, yet a 30-second reel can stir hearts and spark change. I remember a reel about the Telangana forest—it went viral and led to the government returning that forest to the wild.

That, to me, is proof: it's not about the length of your creation, but the impact it makes. When art touches the right chord, it can move people—and even policies.

9. Future Vision and Aspirations

What upcoming projects or ideas are you currently working on or dreaming about? And Do you believe Indian art still needs more recognition on the global stage? If so, how can that be achieved?

I don't dwell on the past or worry much about the future. I focus on living each day to the best of my ability. Even though I face pain and shed tears, I carry a spirit of moving forward. Two things keep me grounded—meditation and painting in my studio. These are my rituals, my quiet moments. Even if it's just for a moment, I never skip them. They give me peace and purpose.

I'm not chasing fame or money; I'm chasing a life that feels meaningful—one that makes me proud and makes my mother proud, watching from above.

Global recognition has never been my goal. I value all my buyers equally, whether they're from India or abroad. There is often a race for global approval in India—as though without it, one is not truly valued. But I don't believe in chasing that. Recognition should come from the work itself, not the place it's acknowledged from.

For me, there are two ways to reach the sky—either leap high or rise slowly by making the land your own. Climb the mountain, befriend the clouds, fly with birds, smile at the stars. That way, even if you fall, the clouds will catch you, and the birds will lift you. You'll never fall alone.



HERE TAKE THESE BOOKS

Mr. Piyush Goel

Columnist Aadhya Publishing House



About the Author:

Piyush Goel, famously known as The Mirror Image Man, is a passionate writer, mechanical engineer, and lover of literature. With over 2,500 books in his personal collection, he is known for his unique mirror-image script writing and contributions to creative thought and education.

"Here, Take These Books"

An old man said this in an old library...

Since childhood, I have been fond of reading books. My parents knew this very well—"Just give him money, he'll definitely buy books." I have a collection of around 2,500 to 3,000 books. My father was in a government job, so we were transferred from place to place, and wherever we went, I would always look for a library—and I would usually find one. These days, it saddens me deeply that mobile phones have not only distanced the new generation from books but also from their loved ones. Around 20-25 years ago, when I used to live in another city, I regularly visited a library. Along with books, I also got to meet new people there. I still remember a man, around 45 years old, who was in government service. He would spend long hours reading books in that library. Whenever I talked to him, it felt wonderful. You could discuss any topic with him.

Time moves on at its own pace. I became a mechanical engineer and moved to another city for work. But the memories of that library always stayed fresh in my mind. My first job was in Greater Noida, and later I shifted to Pilkhuwa. One day, I suddenly got the news that I was selected for a good company in Sonipat. My love for books remained. I often visited the Delhi Book Fair just to buy more books. Many times, I couldn't afford them due to lack of money, but the passion never died.

One Sunday, while strolling through the market in Sonipat, I spotted a library in the distance. I immediately left everything and went straight there. As soon as I entered the library, an old man said, "Here, take these books—they're just what you're looking for." And what a surprise—it was the same person I used to read with 30-35 years ago in that old library. We used to have wonderful conversations on various subjects.

"Yes, yes, it's me," he said. "I used to live here back then and was in service too. Look at this miracle—two book lovers reunited after so many years. That's why the moment I saw you, I said, 'Here, take these books,' because I remembered the kind of books you loved to read."

In our conversation, I found out that this library now belonged to him. And after that day, I decided that I would donate 200 books from my personal collection to his library. I will be handing them over very soon.

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Note :- We always demand the original write-ups from our writers. If any article, short story or poem is found to be a copy of any other article, short story or poem respectively, then the writer would only be responsible for it.

1. Resonance



Dr. Alka Kumar
Writer
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh

When words betray—
With pen in hand,
Paper on the desk,
Thoughts in the mind,
Emotions in the heart—
Yet writing becomes impossible,
Because words betray!

With spring in the air,
Blooming flowers on the ground,
Butterflies sipping nectar,
Honeybees buzzing around—
Still, the poem eludes...
Because words betray!

With grief abound,
And pain all around,
Moist eyes,
A lump in the throat—
Yet sadness can't be expressed,
Because words betray!

Let's write in glory
The unwritten words
With the expression of our eyes.
Let us sing the poem aloud
In an overjoyed, sorrowful tune.
Let us live to the fullest—
Even when words betray...
When words betray!

2. Water

When I started thinking about water,
I thought, there is so much of it on Earth.
But suddenly, a quotation came to mind:

**"Water, water everywhere,
But not a single drop to drink."**

Without water, we cannot live our lives
With good health and a strong body.

If we don't drink water,
Our bodies begin to shrink.

So the quotation is right:
**"Water, water everywhere,
But not a single drop to drink."**

There is a shortage of fresh water on Earth,
And without water, how is birth even possible?

Most of the water is saline,
And without freshwater,
How can trees grow and shine?

What will we drink?
At that moment, I thought of the quotation:

**"Water, water everywhere,
But not a single drop to drink."**

We must save water
For the survival of all.

Without water,
We will surely fall.
When there's no water left to drink,

Once again, the quotation echoes:

**"Water, water everywhere,
But not a single drop to drink."**



**Mr. Anmol
Shrivastava
Student
Vaishali
Bihar**

In the final line of my poem,
I say this with care:
Thank you, God, for giving us
This basic life support.
But if we don't protect it,
There may be no water left to drink.
And then, the quotation will come true:
**"Water, water everywhere,
But not a single drop to drink."**

By Anmol Shrivastava

3. How much more?



Ms. Anna Zanidaki

I have learned since I was little that each barrel is distinguished by its spout, its trunk and especially that bottom.

How much has not been written and mentioned, especially when we come into direct contact with it or happen to make the strongest approachable touch to it!

How many times have people not touched it, with situations or similar events, but who are encouraged by its conditions and with a body and a soul, their whole being, rises up and touches its edge again, ready for its own content to begin to flow.

Some attitudes to life, conditions or similar coordinates, captivatingly declare that bottom, that whatever we wanted to do, with our actions alone, we not only touch it, but we also feel comfortable, with this surface of it.

No matter how much we say or write, if the person himself, man or woman, does not feel when and why the approach to this point comes, one thing is the only certain and certain, let me tell you on my behalf.

The given becomes repressed and the repressed, sought.

This, for those who showed and allowed them to face, this decline of theirs and their wrong path and way out

In stone years and months, weeks and days of testing supplies, for the eloquence of their thought and the clear, obvious course, of a life, which will not sink, but rather elevate that notorious, stature of the soul!!!

Take care to fill it with love and remembrance, rather than with oblivion and imposing shame, of the content of its concepts and its subsequent messages!

The contents of the bottom are difficult and indigestible, where the substances settle and, once there, they are confronted with their sediment and mainly with their distillate!

4. The Crime of Want



Ms. Arushi Mishra
Student
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh

How I wish I could relive my past again,
Change the mess-ups and misunderstandings that
made the quarrels begin.
People who said I was in the wrong—
Just wait, it won't take long—
For me to break your façades and show the world
Your true colours and intentions,
And how you used me when I had no control over my
situations.

Sadly, the past is permanent,
And I can only change it in my lucid dreams.
It's childish of me to think it's a deterrent—
That I'd wake up and realise, "The past was just a
dream."

Or an intuition to warn me about this so-called past,
That I finally have control and can change my world at last—
Where the unprejudiced and unbiased lead,
And the sly and cunning finally pay for their deeds.

5. Explore

And when I went to explore,
I thought I was exploring places—
observing people,
trying their language,
tasting local delicacies,
and loving nature.

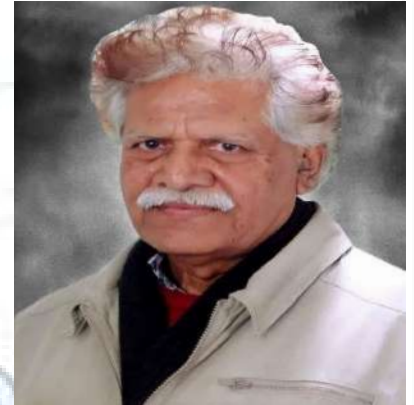
Instead, for the first time,
I began to explore myself:
my priorities before accepting,
my favorites without judging,
my happiness without compromising,
my awareness of carefreeness.

And yes,
from exploring a place
to exploring my own self,
I started loving how it changed me.
Beautiful morals shared by beautiful people
make me happy by helping me realize my worth.



**Ms. Ayushi
Khawade
Student
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh**

6. Gender Box



**Mr. Bhagirath
Chaudhary
Writer, poet**

A highly celebrated Yogi,
An ardent Hajj-going Maulvi,
A keeper of commandments,
A "holier-than-thou" Christian saint—
Together, they arrived at Heaven's gate.
"O keeper of the cosmic records,
Open the gate of Heaven.
Let us in," they said in one voice.

The gatekeeper replied:
"Go back to Earth
And return with your other halves.
Only complete beings are allowed.
You were sent together,
And together you must return."

All three were dismayed.
"What does he mean by 'other half'?"
They asked him,
"Which other half are you talking about, sir?"

The wise gatekeeper answered:
"Where is the woman?"

He continued:
"You three lived as male chauvinists.
You remained prisoners of gender,
Never stepping outside the gender box.
You did not respect your other half.
Do you not know
That every man contains the whole genome—
Male and female together?
And so does every woman?"

"O Yogi, you took pride
In your self-contemplation,
Yet you never once meditated
On the greatness of the feminine divine.
You never tried to understand
How blood transforms into liquid love—
Milk for the babe.
You lacked the patience
To incubate life,
To wait for the child to bloom.
You never reflected on
Why a woman chooses her form—
With a rucksack in front,
Symbolizing sacrifice—
Willing to face the wolves
To protect the love-child."

"O self-proclaimed pious Maulvi,
You kept your woman veiled,
Not as the mother of your children,
But as a reproductive machine.
Once she bore the child,
You took over—
To raise a swordsman
For your insatiable thirst
For empire-building."

"O keeper of holy commandments,
You made a playboy of yourself.
You stripped women naked
To flaunt a so-called civilized world.
For your burning desire
For material consumption,
You reduced the divine feminine
To a mere advertising mannequin."

"I know you three curse me now,
But truth must prevail.
In Heaven,
Only one Dharma holds dominion—
The Dharma of Truth.
The wise ones say:
'There is no religion greater than the religion of truth'
(सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः).
So return to Earth,
And come back only
As complete human beings."

Then the Yogi implored:
"O Divine Self, be our Guru.
Grant us the discerning eye—
The wisdom eye (उपनयन)
That sees only truth."

The gatekeeper replied:
"You must break free of the gender box.
Contemplate the feminine divine within your genome,
Or be born as a woman in your next life—
So you may witness her glory
And embody her truth in your DNA.

Know this well, gentlemen:
The gender box is the last gate on Earth.
It applies equally to women, too.
Every man and woman
Must step out of their gender boxes
Before they can reach Heaven's gate.
Let the truth prevail upon Earth.

By Bhagirath Chaudhary

7. The happiness cactus

"The cactus, long silent and still, felt the change in the air. With a pulse of joy, it bloomed for the first time, sensing happiness deeper than the heart itself."

.....

Rashmi had found the cactus in a quaint nursery tucked away in the heart of Cairo's old market. She hadn't meant to buy a plant, yet something about it had pulled her in—its quiet presence, its spiny resilience. The old shopkeeper had smiled knowingly as he wrapped the pot.

"This one brings joy where it is needed the most," he had said, his voice carrying the weight of an ancient promise.

Back home, Rashmi wasted no time visiting Vrinda and Sameer, carrying the cactus as a housewarming gift.

"Who brings a cactus as a gift?" Vrinda scoffed, eyeing the prickly thing with clear dismay. "And who said it will flower? I see no sign of it. You and your unusual taste, Rashmi. Just like that saree you gave me for my wedding—who wears one with Buddha's teachings handwritten on it?"

Sameer gave her a subtle look, a silent signal to soften her words. Rashmi, however, was unfazed. She and Vrinda had always been brutally honest with each other. Their friendship thrived on their differences—Vrinda, practical and no-nonsense, while Rashmi saw the world through a lens of mystery and wonder.

"How was Egypt?" Vrinda asked, changing the subject.

"Magical," Rashmi said, her eyes lighting up. "There's something powerful about that place. I felt... drawn to it in a way I can't explain. In fact, I've enrolled in a course on Egyptian studies at JNU. I'm leaving for Delhi next week."



**Mrs. Bindu
Unnikrishnan**
Educator and writer
Pune
Maharashtra

Vrinda nodded but barely glanced at the cactus as she set it on their balcony. It sat there, untouched, absorbing light, air, and the silent dreams filling their home.

Yet inside the walls of their house, happiness was slipping through the cracks.

It had been seven years. Seven years of whispered prayers, of doctor visits that ended in quiet disappointment. Vrinda still remembered the hope in Sameer's eyes after their first year together—picking out baby names, imagining nurseries. But over time, those dreams faded into unanswered questions and hollow reassurances.

The weight of it all lay between them. It was in the way Sameer's voice lost its excitement when someone asked, "Any good news?" It was in the way Vrinda avoided family gatherings, in the occasional sharp words they exchanged, words they regretted but never took back.

One evening, after another disheartening doctor's visit, the tension boiled over.

"This isn't fair," Vrinda whispered, staring at the floor. "I have done everything. The diets, the treatments, the medicines. Why is this happening to us?"

Sameer sat beside her but said nothing.

"Say something," she snapped. "Aren't you frustrated? Or have you just given up?"

His jaw tightened. "What do you want me to say, Vrinda? That I cry in the shower sometimes? That I feel useless every time I see you break down? That I hate watching you suffer and not being able to fix it?"

She turned away, biting her lip. They weren't fighting each other; they were fighting the same pain. But some nights, it felt like the pain was winning.

That night, unable to sleep, Vrinda stepped onto the balcony. The cactus stood there, its spiny arms reaching toward the sky. She touched it absentmindedly, its rough texture grounding her thoughts.

It doesn't ask for much. It doesn't need much. And yet, it survives.

She let out a breath she hadn't realized she was holding.

Something about the plant soothed her, as if it absorbed the words she didn't know how to say. She began spending more time outside, watching the sunrise, whispering thoughts into the cool night air.

"I feel like you understand," she murmured one evening, tracing the rim of its pot. "You don't ask questions. You don't make me feel like I'm broken. You just... exist."

One night, Sameer found her outside, gently watering the cactus.

"Since when did you become a plant lover?" he teased, leaning against the railing.

Vrinda shrugged, smiling softly. "It listens. It doesn't judge. It's like... it absorbs all my worries."

Sameer chuckled, then hesitated before stepping closer. "Maybe I should start talking to it too. Work's been... tough."

And so, little by little, the cactus became their silent companion.

Sameer, who once found solace in late-night drives to escape his stress, now found himself on the balcony, fingers tracing the cactus's rough exterior. He would sit there after exhausting days, whispering about difficult meetings, about family pressure to 'do something' about their situation, about his guilt over not being able to make things better for Vrinda.

And strangely, with every word he let out, he felt lighter.

The home, once heavy with sorrow, now carried a quiet peace. The arguments lessened, replaced by long conversations under the stars. Laughter, hesitant at first, found its way back into their lives.

Then, one morning, Vrinda gasped.

A single white flower had bloomed on the cactus.

She called Sameer, her voice trembling with wonder. "Look, Sameer! It's blooming! You said it wouldn't, but it has!"

Sameer, startled by her excitement, rushed to see. The delicate flower, stark against the cactus's thorny exterior, was nothing short of a miracle.

"After all this time," Vrinda whispered, touching the petals as if afraid they would disappear.

"It's like..." Sameer started, then hesitated.

"A sign?" Vrinda finished, her eyes shining.

That night, a soft breeze swept through their home, carrying with it an unspoken blessing. A shift, a stirring, something neither of them could name.

And as if the universe had been waiting for this moment, another miracle followed.

That very month, Vrinda found out she was expecting.

Tears filled her eyes as she held Sameer's hand. The happiness they had longed for had finally arrived, as if carried in by the whisper of an ancient blessing, wrapped in the silent strength of a cactus.

When Rashmi visited again months later, Vrinda greeted her with a radiant smile, one hand resting on her growing belly.

"You were right," she said, touching the now-flourishing cactus. "Some things do bring joy where it's needed the most."

Rashmi smiled, her gaze lingering on the plant. "Or perhaps," she said softly, "joy was always within you. The cactus just reminded you how to bloom again."

As the wind whispered through the balcony, the cactus stood tall—a silent witness to resilience, love, and the quiet miracles that unfold when hope refuses to wither.

By Bindu Unnikrishnan

8. Realities of Life

Positivity paves the way to progress,
Negativity pushes us into stress.

Lies always create a false alarm,
Truth makes us feel cool and calm.

A lie has no legs to last very long,
Truth is always firm and strong.

Honesty follows the path of truth,
Integrity dispels misleading myths.

Holy hearts keep noble thoughts,
The brain delivers effective shots.

Patience brings the best returns,
Time once gone never returns.



**Mr. Girish Chandra
Upadhyay
Advocate Allahabad
High Court,
Allahabad
Prayag Raj
Uttar Pradesh**

9. Rose

Rose beckons vibrancy and cheer—
The most stunning manifestation of God,
Epitomising life with its troubles;
Lest one forget,
Roses have thorns too.

With Mars-like qualities,
Essential to rule the world,
A precursor of the ambrosial life
One often dreams of and envisions.

If I were a rose,
I would emit the fragrance of help,
Dispelling the stink of aloofness,
Spreading the beauty of fame,
To motivate and spread cheer.

All lives ought to be
Blossomed like
The red rose that knows only
How to captivate people
With goodness.



**Dr. Jailaxmi R
Vinayak**
Poet, singer, writer,
Research guide
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh

10. The Survival Of The Fittest & The Most Endangered Species: The Best



Dr. Jernail S. Anand

The market does not support any idea which does not contribute to the further disintegration of the society.-
Anand

Dr. Jernail S. Anand

Whatever is administered best, is the best was a highly misleading statement by Pope, but it is considered a gospel truth by the people who have never rested their faith in the best.

Let me first define the best. The unadulterated best of a society are the intellectuals who do not know politics, and who think of a society which is based on the principles of equality, shared affluence, power to each part of the body politic, and finally peace and harmony. But it is no more than a compulsive dream because the people think from the body, not from the mind.

The society moves forward with two basic factors: money and power. Power grows out of the coffers of a rich person. And power has a powerful sense of living with the second best only for whom higher considerations of life matter little. Money is the essential virtue of a society which believes in Power. The best of men, the intellectuals, the thinkers, the visionaries, the people who sit in their ivory towers, sculpting theories yield ground to people who sculpt strategems sitting in the kitchens cabinets. The second and third best, who grab power and the sources of wealth, now have a great responsibility to maintain status quo so that they can stay in power. And, it is here that the worst of the civilization rests.

The society moves forward. If you try to find the crop of the best among teachers, lawyers, professionals, politicians, bureaucrats, business men. you will be disappointed because the best have suicidal tendencies, and we find the second best, the third best, and then, even the worst, in the driving seat.

The society which believes in money and power, soon finds itself lost to the whims of the second best people and their dreams of power. Had the right people been in the driving seat, the world would have been a better place to live in. But because it is driven by insane passions and manipulated by crafty people, we now have a total confusion of values. This world never believed in the best. The best were grounded, ignored and even insulted, simply because they did not believe in pushing forward, or staying in power, by playing foul with their principles.

It is a murderous society, which has lost all sense of the moral and the ethical, and believes in nothing but power, wealth, fame and self-survival. The survival of the fittest means the fittest is the best. We are alive now, among the people who proved themselves the best and the fittest to survive. And it is an amalgam of power, craft and guile which helped people to stay in power, and rule the world. Can we expect joy and happiness in a world in which divine factors of existence were disregarded and disrespected?

The best values of this society are not goodness, kindness, love, compassion, and sacrifice. People are trained not to believe in any such thing, which smacks of mediocrity. Modernity lies in broken families and broken nerves, and a confusion and chaos, in which your own body parts find themselves in a state of rebellion. If this is not so, you are living in a society, which is not post-modern. As the real life thrust is found in the cities, the virus of postmodernity is spreading fast to the villages also, which believed in peace and tranquility.

What a man by default needs: a house, a wife, a job and an environment which supports life. What a man of wisdom requires: wealth and power. He does not believe in a house or a family. As such, he has no desire for peace either. He wants thrill in his life, even if it kills.

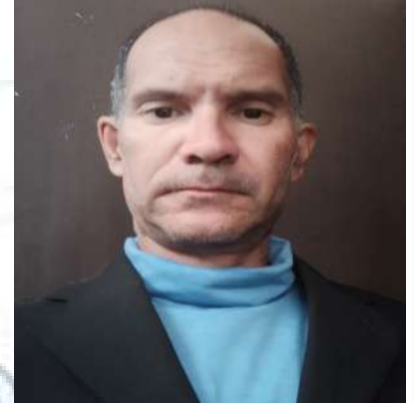
It pains me to think that everywhere, the society is being run by people who are second best. Who are best at their own survival. Who believe that the best men must be consigned to the libraries. The market does not support any idea which does not contribute to the further disintegration of the society. The world's dadas want more confusion in social ranks, where men fail to find their feet, and their minds are lost in a maze of confusing passions, shorn of ideals. What finally describes this world is: There are no role-models. No examples to be set and

followed. No men of character. No people who fight for their principles. The passion with which our elders fought for our freedom, we are fighting with equal passion for dissolution of that dream. The best people found themselves on the gallows, leaving their dreams to their own destiny, in the hands of the second best, who thrive on what they [the best] never thought of. A society minus all scruples. A society which believes in the second best. A society which exalts the worst. And a world which is run by men who possess no faith in essential values of life. By reverse logic, they are promoting the death of the divine, whether it is the divine will, remains to be seen.

[Dr. Jernail Singh Anand, [the Seneca, Charter of Morava, Franz Kafka and Maxim Gorky awards Laureate, with an opus of 180 books, whose name adorns the Poets' Rock in Serbia]] is a towering literary figure whose work embodies a rare fusion of creativity, intellect, and moral vision. He's not just an Indian author but a global voice, challenging readers to confront the complexities of existence while offering hope through art and ethics. His legacy seems poised to endure as a beacon of conscience in a turbulent world. If Tagore is the serene sage of a colonial past, Anand is the fiery prophet of a chaotic present. Anand's genius lies in his relentless ambition and ethical depth. Anand may well be considered as the conscience of the 21st century, carving a unique niche among Indian English writers with a voice that resonates globally while remaining fiercely Indian.]

By Jernail S. Anand

11. Night Bird (Sonnet)



Mr. Jose Luis Lopez
Writer artist
San Juan
Puerto Rico

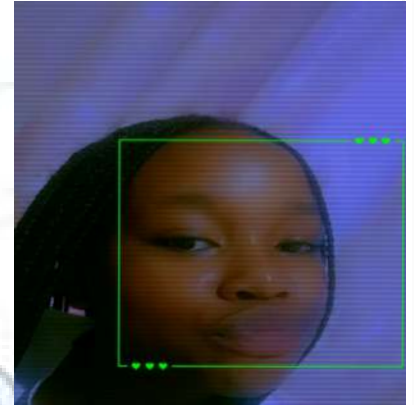
Dark awaited a walk, unsuspected,
A chirp emerged from a place filtered.
A bang sounded, the mystery unexpected,
Water flows, like a drop altered.

The night bird seemed hanging, untouched,
A model unchained, wanting to gain focus.
Truly, an act of the animal, not touched,
Mere behavior, the human was focus.

The night bird came to blur the image,
None would have known the attitude.
It just passed by, the raw homage.

The night bird was the open raw passage,
That brought out the mistaken altitude,
Finally granted, dismissed message.

12. A world of corruption



**Ms. Kudzaishe Zoe
Berejena
Student
Odzi
Zimbabwe**

In a world of competition,
With little or no vindication,
A world full of deception,
Where some have made a dedication
To provide an avocation
Under the sun's radiation,
With no further meditation
Or any consultation,
Forming a presentation
Based on shallow investigation.

Welcome to a world full of discrimination,
A world with little or no consideration
If the shared information
Is suitable for a child's observation,
Or if it becomes a source of opposition
To those with the motivation
To ensure child protection.

Welcome to a world where a leader's careless reaction
Can catalyze corruption,
Or even result in the destruction
Of a nation,
Regardless of its reputation
Or envied financial position.
All of this leads to the creation
Of massive opposition
And widespread devastation.

Welcome to a world with no true definition,
Or any clear demonstration
Of kindness, love, and affection—
A place where people find satisfaction

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In difficult and tragic decisions,
A place where every rule or regulation
Is at high risk of misinterpretation.
Welcome to planet Earth.

By Kudzaishe Zoe Berejena



13. A Mother's Secret Potion



**Ms. Lucy Victoria
David
Motivational
speaker, writer
and international
influencer
Durban
South Africa**

I read of a mother once
who loved her family very much.
She did all she could to keep them happy every
single day.

The family sat around a rather large wooden table in
the kitchen, and watched how she prepared the meals.

When the dish was almost done,
she would go to her kitchen cupboard
and take out a jar.

She would carefully take a handful from it, and very
discreetly add it to the pot.

Everyone knew they were not to touch this jar, at any
given time, this was her rule.

When the meals were finally served, the delicious taste
and smell, kept them asking her for more.

They concluded it was her secret ingredient, her magic potion which did the
trick, every time!

How else would every meal be this delicious?

One cold day in winter she went off to bed after dinner, and never got up again.
She died very peacefully in her sleep, much to the shock of her loving family!

In the days that ensued, her daughters took on the responsibility of preparing
the meals. Curious to know what the magic potion was, which their mother
used daily in all their meals, they reached up into the cupboard and found the
magic jar!

They hurriedly opened it and to their dismay, they found it empty and a note
inside which read,

" My dearest daughter Misty, always remember to prepare every meal with love and a prayer for your family. Reach into this jar, and say a prayer of love for the meals and for them!

With all my love, mum! "

That was the day that they discovered their mothers mysterious meal potion!
Let's take a lesson from this dear mother. Our families will be so glad we did!!!!"

By Lucy Victoria David

14. Mother's Love



**Ms. Meenakshi
Sharma 'Manushri'
Ghaziabad
Uttar Pradesh**

In the cradle of life, a mother's love does bloom,
Her gentle touch, a soothing lullaby in every room.
With hands that cradle and hearts that heal,
A mother's love, a treasure that time can't steal.

In her eyes, a world of wisdom and grace,
Her love, like a beacon, lighting up each space.
Through laughter and tears, she stands strong,
A guiding light appears when things go wrong.

With each step we take and every word we say,
A mother's love guides us along the way.
In her embrace, we find solace and peace,
A love that never fades, a bond that will never cease.

15. Bravery in Heartbreak!



**Mrs. Meryl
Moonsamy**
Wife, mom, attorney
Durban
South Africa

When I lie here all alone,
Wondering if you're awake,
I look across to where you lie,
And then I feel my heart break.

Who would have thought that my strong tower
Would one day need to renew his power?

But then I realize that maybe—just maybe—
It's to remind me that life is not to be taken for granted.
It's always been all I ever wanted.

Amidst the anxiety of my ill health,
You holding my hand has always been my wealth.
We may not have all the riches money buys,
But you always wipe my eyes, if ever I cry.

I can wriggle in my bed at 2 in the morning,
And up you are to check if I'm yawning.

It's been a long haul—
Eighteen days to date—
I'm starting to brawl,
'Cause this is not our fate.

We've got so much to talk about,
And so many plans to make.
I know for a fact, without a doubt,
You can't refuse—not for my sake.

You know when I am weary,
And how I then get dreary.
You know when I am stressed,
I stop looking my best.

You, and only you, know—
Even when I try putting on a show.

You know when I'm strong,
But pretending is oh so wrong,
Only because we both know:
My show is to keep you brave,
And yours is to make me feel so.

Yet still we keep going on,
Trying to make each other feel strong.
Our boys are missing you so much—
You see it in their eyes and touch.

In the way they say, "Hello, Dad,"
In the smile that shows they're really sad.
In the family prayers late each night—
"God, keep my dad safe,"
And "Heal his pain, make him all right."

I can't afford to stop being strong,
Can't afford to stop soldiering on.
As you lent me the reins to man the fort,
While you get a chance to heal
And come back home—to all that's yours,
And all that fills your precious thoughts.

By Meryl Moonsamy

16. Outside The Length of My Shadow



**Mr. Nhamo
Muchagumisa
Teacher
Mutare
Zimbabwe**

The fulfilment of prophecy was reason for celebration for Mrs Chegura. She was finally going to drop the name that had made the pestilences of estrangement worse than pain in the bone marrow. The leader of her church had prophesied that she was going to win the attention, the favour and the love of a young businessman, probably younger than herself.

Her world had turned purple when the young businessman, who had been getting spiritual help from her very church leader proposed marriage to her. He was also a victim of estrangement who had lost his wife to the joys of the world as a result of poverty. He had suffered even more pain in the efforts he had made to find emotional healing, but there seemed to be nothing more elusive than healing after being found worthless by someone in whom one had invested one's heart. But now that he had made a phenomenal breakthrough, he did not entertain even the slightest idea of seeking reconciliation with his former soulmate.

“I left a man whose heart had lost delight in matrimonial rights, and had rather sought pleasure in the lies of women who spelt the word love with the dollar sign,” Mrs Chegura had explained.

“So our stories are almost the same,” explained Tavingwa, the young business entrepreneur. “We lost value in the eyes of the people we had considered to be worth more than the world and its boundless riches.”

“If I should be yours, as my heart tells me I should be, I don’t see how your worth will fade before my eyes,” said Mrs Chegura, “especially as the spirit has already confessed that I will find a heart that would never chase a joy outside the length of my shadow.”

“May the word from your mouth be the voice of your heart and soul,” Tavingwa

had said to the beautiful mother of two, who had lived a purely spiritual life since she had broken up with her husband.

After abandoning her marriage on suspicion that her husband was having an amoral relationship with a workmate, Mrs Chegura had relocated from Penhalonga to Bocha after the members of her new religious sect had left for the same place, following the church leader's prophecy that the church had a lot of work to do in Bocha, Mrs Chegura had lived a celibate life. She had not rushed to find love as her heart seemed to tell her that she had had her share and lost it to another woman.

The human heart has places that never go into extinction; such places only need the right kind of provocation to come back to life. The exuberance with which Mrs Chegura reacted to Tavingwa's arrival in her life was punctuated with the heat that could melt metals. He had become her sunrise, her noon and her sunset.

Tavingwa was a business mogul on rural standards and owned a supermarket at Muchena Business Centre in Chiadzwa. The colossal building had a red tiled roof and was the most appealing structure at the flourishing business centre. It had security lights right round its exterior quarters, making the building the splendor of moonless nights.

The Interior comprised a high ceilinged roof, festooned with large light bulbs secured by golden rims.

The floor was made of porcelain tiles that mirrored the roof and its decorations, adding magic to the splendor of a place one could hardly believe was owned by a 32 year old. Of course, one could not see from wall to wall because of the high shelves that weighed with items only money could buy.

His house was also a profound testimony to Tavingwa's place on the socio economic pyramid. It was a spacious mansion, roofed with black tiles. Erected on high ground it seemed to play the role of superordinate over inferior structures that surrounded it. It had huge windows, making it an impressive work of red brick, steel and glass. The interior of the mansion comprised twelve rooms

extravagantly decorated with casement drapings.

That was the comfort Mrs Chegura enjoyed when she had become Mrs Tavingwa. She never missed a moment of her life as Mrs Chegura. When the 36 year old woman found herself carrying Tavingwa's baby, she could not contain her satisfaction, joy and pride.

Two weeks away from her expected delivery date, Mrs Chegura (as that is her original name) was admitted to a state of the art upmarket private hospital. It was when she was in the maternity unit that she started having strange experiences in her sleep. Every time her eyelids steeped to sail her into the much needed sleep, she heard the noise of speeding vehicles, leading to an explosive banging sound and the commotion of wailing voices. She had never been involved in a road traffic accident and was fortunate enough not to have witnessed a serious one. Why was an accident scene playing in the darkness of her sleep?

Who could she tell all this? Telling Tavingwa might compromise her relationship with him. He would suspect that she was a host of evil spirits that had destroyed her first marriage and were now attacking her second marriage. She hoped that the nightmares would end after her delivery as they had never been there before she fell pregnant.

She gave birth to a healthy baby boy, but an hour after the birth of her first son, news came to her that a mysterious fire had destroyed Tavingwa's supermarket the previous night. Fortunately there was no loss of life, but Tavingwa's whereabouts could not be ascertained. There was a sudden congestion in her chest as if she had swallowed a cloud of saw dust. Was Tavingwa a ritualist? As questions flooded her mind another report came, that an earth tremor had caused damage to Tavingwa's house. Although the house had not collapsed, there were cracks an adult person could walk through.

No answer came her way, only neighbours who came to share their grief over the misfortune that had befallen her. The birth of her only son was no moment of celebration at all, especially when two days after the tragedy the whereabouts of her husband remained a mystery. When she was handed her hospital bill, Mrs

Chegura's joints froze and there were sudden cramps in her bowels as if she was getting into labour again, US\$9 000 and Tavingwa's whereabouts still unknown! How was she going to raise such money?

Sometimes things happen too fast for comfort. Three days after the birth of her child, the Provincial Minister came to settle the hospital bill having been informed of Mrs Chegura's unusual predicament by the hospital staff, which the mainstream news channels had also made a field day of. Now that the hospital bill had been settled, Mrs Chegura was a free woman, but was there a home to go back to apart from her flat roofed single room structure and round mud and thatch kitchen?

Upon her arrival back in her rural village, Mrs Chegura was visited by two uniformed police officers who showed her a note Tavingwa had written with severe regrets. The note had been salvaged from the ruins of his mansion, but his whereabouts were still unknown. The most outrageous part of his confession was that he had robbed road traffic accident victims twice. It was on the second robbery that he had left a road accident scene with a heavy satchel which he later discovered to be containing a countless US 100 dollar bills.

By Nhamo Muchagumisa

17. Is That the love I should take along with me?



**Mr. Phillips Tayo
Damilola
Writer/Content
Enthusiast,
Lagos
Nigeria**

Good Morrow

Dull moments,
Because they hide the emotions
Of all and sundry,
Smiling within friendly faces,
Foes with the fiercest hearts and tempers,
People we call friends.

The Other Time

An immemorial crucifix,
We lost a rare soul,
From the Arctic hemisphere,
Now veering through the modern space,
Where we are just open, closed eyes,
In a hood of neighbors,
I can take their love along with me,
Mind and unwinding life.

When You Stride Lonely

They watch with caustic taunts,
Let them fall unto our hymns—
Didn't we say so before?
It takes time, yet it comes to pass,
Is that love to take with me?
You can't take such love along with you!
For no, do not harvest lustful grains of barcodes,
To live your life in their blind colors,
The destinies of sticky fates.

My Priest Asks Solemnly

Brotherly faith, thou distant,
Asking me to kneel for hands laid,
Let him speak good tidings,
Like the biblical dove,
Of my family's boost and bastion,
My Nebo's hide peeping,
Eyes wide, glaring—
Is that love I should take along with me?
I nudge, "What will be, will be."
I bow and walk away.

Why Is the World So Weird?

Why is the world so wired,
To prompt evils over good,
Sorrows over joys,
Yet nail life, unfortunately,
Harking heavens crying loudly,
But it has not slipped open,
Adroitly seen, inner dooms,
Of man against man—
Is that the love I should take along with me?

Can I Take Such Love Along with Me Again?

Not from heaven to earth,
For the angels, busy kinsmen,
Lift and cast earthly warfares,
We, mankind, are sniffing rats,
To bite and bellow hurtful air,
Console and condemn,
Is that the love I should take along with me?

By Phillips Tayo Damilola

18. Shimmery Summer



**Mrs. Promila Punnu
Bhardwaj
Retd. General
Manager,
Industries
Department,
Himachal Pradesh**

Comes hesitatingly at first, shimmery, shy summer,
After a long span of shivering, cold winter.
It is welcomed with open arms, like a long-awaited—
Someone very near and dear, whom we deeply missed.

All feel more active, enthusiastic, and energetic,
Getting into full swing, feeling truly fantastic.
Happier too, as longer days enhance socialization,
While nature blooms fully, adding to the fascination.

Shunning its shyness, summer soon starts showing
Its tantrums—like an over-pampered child—growing
Irritating, with scorching heat, especially at midday,
Appearing like an uninvited guest we wish would go
away.

A variety of delicious fruits, the cuckoo's songs, pleasant mornings,
Chirping birds, and vibrant life make summer more charming.
Considering its pros and cons, it becomes endurable—
With more leisure for pleasure, it turns quite loveable.

19. Conserve Natural Resources



**Mr. Pushpendra
Pratap Singh
Teacher
Shahjahanpur
Uttar Pradesh**

Whatever is available in our environment to meet our needs is known as a natural resource — nature's free gift to humankind. Even human beings themselves are vital components of these resources, as resources are shaped and utilized through human activities.

However, in the modern scenario, it is unfortunate to see that mankind — the most intelligent and capable creation of nature — is disrupting the ecological balance, despite being aware of the harmful consequences.

Natural resources are essential for human survival and for maintaining the quality of life. Yet, by treating these resources as limitless gifts of nature, humans have begun to exploit them indiscriminately. This misuse has led to major global challenges such as climate change, ozone layer depletion, environmental pollution, land degradation, and a broader ecological crisis.

Several decades ago, Mahatma Gandhi wisely said, "There is enough for every body's need, but not for everybody's greed."

Now more than ever, it is critical for people across the world to reflect on this global concern and adopt eco-friendly behaviors.

To conserve our invaluable, life-supporting natural resources, each of us holds a moral responsibility. Firstly, equitable distribution of resources is essential for sustaining quality of life and promoting global harmony. Secondly, sustainable development must be adopted in a practical and inclusive manner. This means using resources wisely — according to individual needs — and avoiding misuse, overuse, or exploitation, so that we can preserve them for future generations.

If we fail to act, the day may not be far when humanity will struggle even for basic survival.

All nations must come together and act responsibly for the conservation of our natural resources. It often seems that modern society is engaged in a blind and directionless race toward unbalanced development — without considering the long-term impact. This reckless pursuit may ultimately lead our green planet toward widespread devastation.

Such shortsighted actions are not expected from the most intelligent and thoughtful species on Earth.

Let us not forget: preserving nature today is the only way to secure tomorrow.

By Pushendra Pratap Singh

20. The Environment Through an Artist's Eyes: Plastic and Microplastic



**Mr. Rajkumar
Kushwah
Student
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh**

In today's world, we've become addicted to the idea of unchecked development. We keep wrapping ourselves in the blanket of progress — but somewhere along the way, this very development is leading us toward destruction. So, the real question is — what kind of development are we pursuing?

Is it genuine progress, or just an illusion sold in its name? Development doesn't mean eliminating everything that stands in the way. Cutting down forests to build towers, constructing buildings without care, or displacing people from their homes — none of this is real progress. True development means solving people's actual problems while protecting the environment and upholding their constitutional values.

Today, in the world we live in, convenience often comes with hidden damage — and we choose to ignore it. Plastic is one such example. It made our lives easier, but now this very thing is slowly harming both us and nature. And that's exactly what I want to bring attention to.

Plastic: From Solution to Threat

Plastic was once seen as a blessing — but due to our negligence, it's turning into a curse. And now, the consequences of our actions are being felt by the environment and will be faced by future generations.

In the beginning, plastic was considered a revolutionary invention. We started using it in every part of daily life — almost every small item began to come in plastic bags.

It was light, cheap, and durable — but now this durability has become its greatest danger.

The plastic and polythene we carelessly throw into rivers, lakes, and streets doesn't disappear. Instead, it breaks down into tiny particles known as microplastics.

“An Invisible Threat — Closer Than You Think”

Imagine plastic so small that it can't even be seen — yet it's entering our bodies every day through the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink. These are microplastics — plastic particles smaller than 5 millimeters. They've now spread across the oceans, the soil, and even the air around us.

Recent research shows that we're not just consuming them through seafood, but also through tap water, bottled water, salt, and even beer.

The plastic we throw into rivers is swallowed by aquatic animals, and through the food chain, that poison eventually reaches us.

Microplastics are also affecting soil fertility and destroying biodiversity. It is estimated that just through salt, a person consumes nearly 2,000 microplastic particles per year.

But it doesn't stop there — plastic bottles, food packaging, and even beauty products release chemicals that can enter our bodies and disrupt hormones, increase obesity, cause diabetes, and even lead to cancer.

What's even more alarming is that microplastics have already been found inside the human body — in newborns' placentas, in mothers' breast milk, and in vital organs like the heart, kidneys, liver, and brain.

These particles are silently damaging our health in countless ways.

According to the WHO, there is not enough concrete evidence yet to determine the full extent of harm caused by microplastics — but the signs we're seeing are definitely worrying.

Kla, Climate aur Ham

I'm currently part of a fellowship by the organization Youngshala, titled "Kla, Climate aur Ham."

My topic is plastic and microplastic, which I've expressed through doodling and painting. I've used plastic waste not only as a subject but also as a medium in my artworks.

In some of my pieces, I've tried to depict the seriousness of microplastics, building a story around the question —

"In our pursuit of comfort, are we unknowingly carrying a slow poison with us?"

What I Learned While Working with Plastic

We often pick up plastic bags casually for small things — and throw them away without a second thought.

That same plastic then goes on to pollute the environment and ultimately harms us.

But through working on climate issues, not only did I gain a deeper understanding of plastic — I also changed from within.

Now, I no longer see plastic items as just 'objects' — I see them as responsibilities.

I believe real change begins when we change our habits.

We need to move towards solutions. That means reducing plastic use, encouraging recycling, and choosing biodegradable alternatives.

And most importantly — staying aware, and helping others become aware too.

By Rajkumar Kushwah

21. Man - shoulder of responsibilities



**Mr. Shashi Dhar
Kumar
Software
Professional &
Author
Katihar
Bihar**

Men! Yes, those men—
The ones who leave for work with their heads down,
And return late in the evening,
Not just carrying fatigue,
But the weight of responsibilities on their shoulders.

Ask him—
Where is his refuge?
Where is his courtyard?
Where someone says—
“Rest for a while,
Have some warm food,
Here, let me fan you,
Take a moment to breathe!”

He has no maternal home,
No grandmother’s or mother’s love,
No courtyard beneath the banyan tree
Where someone says—
“Look at you, boy, you haven’t changed a bit!”

Because he is ‘a man’, you see!
He must keep moving forward—
Like an ox tied to a plow,
Like a train racing without a station,
Like a foundation stone
Carrying the weight of an entire building.

Tell me, will you ever say—
“Rest now, brother.
We are here, by your side”?
No!
Because his tears

Are mistaken for weakness,
And his silence
Is assumed to be wisdom.

Oh, society!
You have bound him
In chains of duty,
And then declared—
“A man doesn’t feel pain!”

But he, too, needs a courtyard—
Where he can be a little ‘vulnerable,’
Where someone asks—
“Did you eat, son?”
And without another word,
Places a bowl of peace beside his pillow.

By Shashi Dhar Kumar

22. My Treasure Trove



Mrs. Sindhu Rana
writer, poet,
voice - over artist,
former convent
school teacher,
script writer for
documentaries
Jalandhar
Punjab

Book lovers/avid readers would agree that old books have a strange fragrance, that is unique to them- just like the new ones !

Last year, at my granny's place I discovered an old library! What a bounty ,especially for a reader as hungry as me !Again ,it was a dusty place ; uninviting yet I felt drawn towards it.

It had a narrow passage with books stacked on both its sides.I felt amused. Suddenly my mind became excited- in a flash names of authors and names of books , I had read ,since my childhood, in my girlhood flashed through my mind.....they were novels ,short stories, travelogs, memoirs, biographies poems,articles, self-help books, comics, magazines...!

I hurriedly did a fast- paced dusting activity and mind you it was tedious enough!

My eyes and my hands searched through the shelves for familiar authors.On spotting a few I brought them out.

Some books had their pages turning yellow yet the words stood out. These books looked like shadows of their previous selves.

Lovingly, I , held them, smelt them, looked into them and then like a precious heirloom that is to be preserved, I placed them on a side- table. They were going to be my companions for the coming few days, during my stay there.

In the next few days I rummaged through almost all the books kept there. There were some books with colorful covers, attractive titles but they failed to hook me. Then there were some magazines that seemed to be peeping out waiting for their turn to be touched and opened. Silently, I asked them to wait. I told them- I

was as excited to meet them as excited they were to be brought out.

Days flew past and my vacation came to an end. I had enjoyed the stay with dear granny who had pampered me to no end. My late grandfather, how I missed him..I felt he had tried to compensate his absence with books that I could browse through. It had indeed been an exhilarating, fun- filling and a rejuvenating experience!

Needless to say, I brought back a few books - for the times I could read and re-read them at my own liberty. Today, they are a part of my very own library. They are precious, enticing, valuable, meaningful, enriching and a part of my treasure trove !

A few sit on my bedside table- handy for a comfortable night- read.I dip into them very often before putting off my bed- switch.

Anyone can borrow- if he / she claims to be read--y enough!

By Sindhu Rana

23. Time to meet the shadow

The deep silence of the shadow
Slants over the yellowing grass field.
Reluctant feet drag homeward,
Amidst the indistinct whispering
Of the wind.
Time to rub the patina of pretense
Off the face,
Time to grab a handful of the dimming light
And fling it at the dark mirror,
And meet the stranger there.

Time to look out for an
Intimate space to play
Blind Man's Buff with the shadow,
To grope at its elusive face,
Hiding behind a century-old pain.
Time now to meet the shadow,
To lose a whole world of light in it,
To look in the face of the shadow
And call it quits.



Dr. Snehaprava Das
Associate Prof. of
Eng.
Bhubaneswar
Odisha

24. Eternal Rest



Mr. Tha Ono
Teacher
Gasparillo
Trinidad & Tobago

Garden of the weary, where silence blooms alone...
A river of kindness gently flows, through stones that
time has thrown...
Each drop whispering promises, a gentle hand to
hold—
A sanctuary of solace, where hearts unfold.

Beneath burden's weight, we feel twilight's soft
embrace,
Compassion plants seeds in the quiet, darkest space.
Roots dig deep in sorrow, branches reach for light,
Offering weary souls refuge from the night.

Embracing life's autumn, leaves begin to fall,
A quilt of shared experience blankets one and all.
Each stitch a story woven—of laughter and of tears—
Binding us together through the rest of our years.

The sun begins to set, colors fading to stillness,
In the hush of the moment, true connection bears witness.
In the heart's surrender, we find sacred trust,
In the quiet presence, we discover what is just.

Tend to the garden with hands soft and true;
In the act of giving, we find ourselves anew.
Gentle light bathes the evening, where dreams softly cast,
Finding our eternal rest, in the compassionate love that holds us fast.

25. A Breakthrough



Mrs. Usha Krishnan
Life Coach,
NLP Coach &
Educationist
New Delhi

Hued in abundant green,
Steel-spined, though left alone,
The lonely leaf, in its shine,
Smiles at all that is seen.

Enjoying the process of weather-proofing,
Accepting its time of withering,
The lonely leaf, in its path-breaking,
Smiles at all that is seen.

Sighing at its abrupt fall in a blissful state to prove,
Cajoled by the cool breeze's act—an endless dove,
The lonely leaf, in its new alcove,
Smiles at all that is seen, like a loyal glove.

Welcoming its present, having been so thorough,
Patting itself for the strength to plough through,
The lonely leaf, in its quiet breakthrough,
Smiles at all that is seen.

26. Life is Short



**Ms. Vaishnavi
Shrivastava
Student
Vaishali
Bihar**

Live the life you love,
Love the life you live.
For it is very short,
And can never be bought.

Life can be good,
Or it can be bad.
You have many things
You wish you never had.

A really nice house,
Even a very fine car—
Those fancy things in life
Won't get you very far.

Life is for enjoyment,
Live yours to the fullest.
For it is very short,
And can never be bought.

Striving for great riches
May be a waste of time.
Make the best of what you have
While you're still in your prime.

You have many things
You wish you never had.
But life is made for living—
Whether it's happy or sad.

**“Panache”
Aadhya Publishing
House**



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