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Panache Ink

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
LITERARY EXCELLENCE



Vol. 01 / Issue. 08
OCTOBER 2026

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Chief Editor:
Dr. Akanksha Shrivasatva
Aadhya Publishing House

Preface

"Panache Ink" 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 Ink 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

PANACHE INK INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

October 2026

Dr. Akanksha Shrivastava
Founder, Publisher and Chief Editor

Mr. Lalit Kishore Gaur
Technical head

Panache Ink
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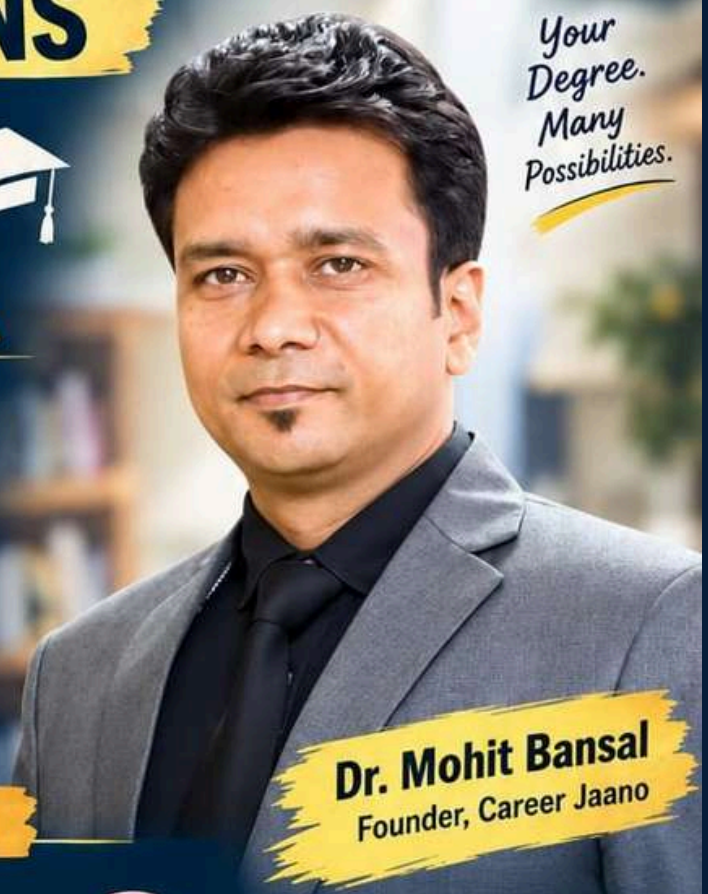
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AN INITIATIVE BY PANACHE INK INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE | CAREER GUIDANCE PARTNER Career Jaano



Editorial

When Words Become a Way of Living

A Message from the Chief Editor

Everyone has feelings, dreams, memories, and stories hidden within them. Some find expression through conversation, some through silence, and others through the emotions they carry in their hearts. Yet, many people believe they cannot write simply because they do not know how to put their thoughts into words. At Panache Ink, we believe that every heart holds a story, and every story deserves a voice.

Writing is not merely about using beautiful words or following perfect grammar. It is about observing life, understanding emotions, and finding the courage to express what we feel. Sometimes, a simple sentence written with honesty can touch more hearts than a thousand elaborate words. Every great writer begins somewhere—with a thought, a feeling, a question, or even a blank page.

The purpose of Panache Ink International Magazine is to create a welcoming platform where ideas can flourish and voices can be heard. We celebrate experienced authors as well as emerging writers, students, professionals, poets, storytellers, and dreamers. We believe that literature should not be limited to a privileged few; it should be an open space where people from different backgrounds can share their perspectives and connect through the power of words.

Our October 2026 edition brings together diverse stories, reflections, poems, and creative expressions that invite readers to pause, think, feel, and discover new perspectives. Each contribution represents the courage to express an idea and the willingness to share a part of oneself with the world. Behind every piece of writing lies a person with a unique experience, and within every reader lies the possibility of discovering something meaningful.

As Chief Editor, one of my greatest aspirations is to encourage those who have always wanted to write but have never taken the first step. You do not need to be a published author to begin. You do not need extraordinary experiences to tell a meaningful story. Your everyday life, your relationships, your challenges, your joys, and your dreams can all become the foundation of powerful writing. What matters most is your willingness to begin, learn, and keep going.

Everyone has feelings, but not everyone knows how to express them in words. Join Panache Ink to discover the writer within you.

We invite you to read, write, share, and grow with us. Let your imagination explore new horizons, let your experiences inspire others, and let your words become a bridge between hearts and minds. Whether you wish to write a poem, a short story, a personal reflection, or an article, give yourself permission to begin. Your first words need not be perfect; they only need to be yours.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our writers, readers, editors, contributors, and well-wishers whose enthusiasm and support bring Panache Ink to life. Together, we are building more than a magazine—we are nurturing a community that values creativity, celebrates individuality, and believes in the transformative power of literature.

Let us continue to create a world where stories are welcomed, ideas are respected, and every aspiring writer feels encouraged to find their voice.

Read with curiosity. Write with courage. Express with honesty. Inspire through words.

And remember: the writer you are waiting to become may already be within you, waiting for the first sentence.

Let Panache Ink be the place where your thoughts find wings and your words find a home.

With warm regards and literary affection,

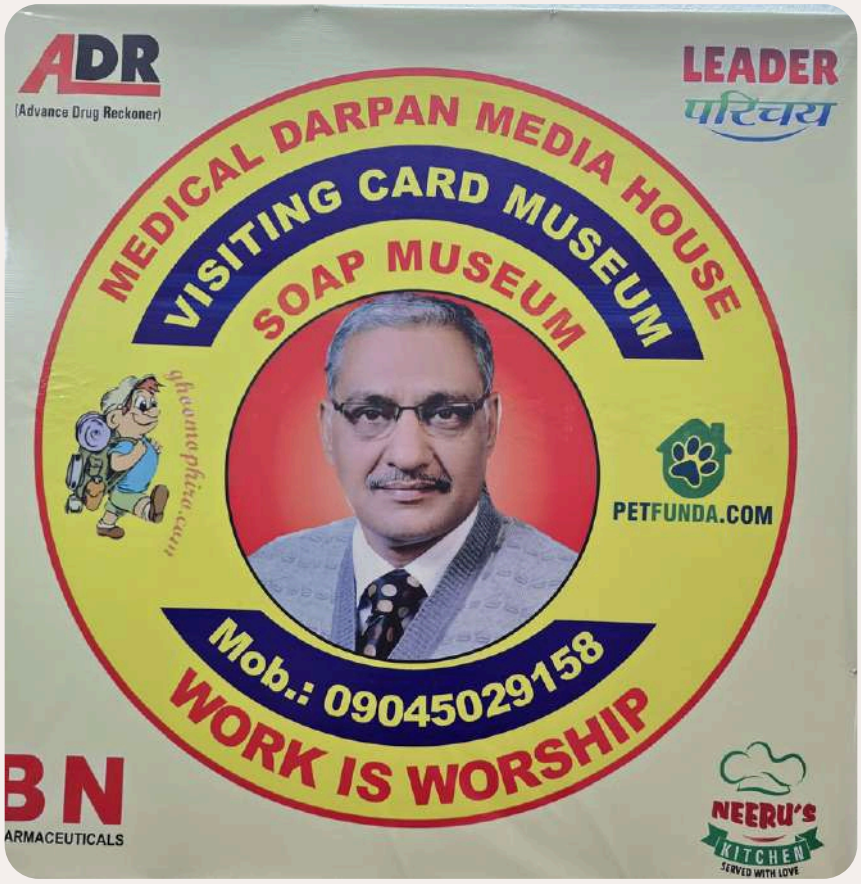
Dr. Akanksha Shrivastava
Founder, Publisher & Chief Editor
Panache Ink International Magazine
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INTERVIEW

From the Chief Editor's Desk

It is a pleasure to feature a personality whose journey beautifully reflects the values of passion, perseverance, and purpose. Our distinguished guest reminds us that even the most ordinary objects can preserve extraordinary stories of history, culture, and human life. Through his remarkable collecting journey and contributions to medical and pharmaceutical journalism, he demonstrates how personal interests can evolve into a meaningful legacy for society.
His belief that achievements carry a greater responsibility than recognition is truly inspiring. At Panache Ink, we celebrate individuals who look beyond personal success and strive to create something valuable for future generations. His journey encourages us to preserve our past, strengthen our present, and inspire the future through knowledge, dedication, and meaningful action.
It is an honour to bring his thoughts and experiences to our readers.

— Dr Akanksha Shrivastava
Chief Editor, Panache Ink International Magazine



Interview with Mr. Brijesh Garg



1. From Collector to Creator
You are known for your remarkable collections of visiting cards, soaps, toothpaste collections, special-date currencies, and other unique objects. What inspired you to begin collecting, and when did you realize that this could become a meaningful part of your identity and legacy?

For me, collecting is not merely about accumulating objects; it is a way of preserving history, memories, and human creativity. As I began collecting visiting cards, soaps, toothpaste products, special-date currencies, and other unique objects, I realized that even things people normally use and forget can carry a story about their time and society.
Gradually, this passion became an integral part of my personality. Today, I see my collections not merely as a personal achievement, but as a legacy that can be preserved for future generations

2. The Story Behind Medical Darpan
What was the vision behind establishing Medical Darpan Media House, and how has the organization evolved from its early days to its present identity encompassing Medical Darpan, Pharma Darpan, and Pharma News?

The fundamental vision behind Medical Darpan Media House has been to provide reliable information, communication, and a common platform for people associated with the medical and pharmaceutical sectors. Over time, this initiative expanded, leading to the development of Medical Darpan, Pharma Darpan, and Pharma News.
Our objective is not limited to publishing news. We aim to strengthen communication, awareness, and knowledge within the medical and pharmaceutical community.

3. Preserving Things That Others Overlook
Many everyday objects are considered ordinary until someone recognizes their historical or cultural value. What do your collections teach us about preserving memories, history, and human creativity?

My collections have taught me that the importance of an object is not always determined by its monetary value. Sometimes, an ordinary-looking object can tell an important story about its time, society, culture, or the lifestyle of a particular generation.
Therefore, preservation, for me, is also the preservation of memories. Something small and ordinary today can become an important historical document tomorrow.

4. A Collection That Has a Story
Among your various collections, which one holds the greatest personal significance for you, and is there a particular object or item whose story you would especially like the world to know?

Among my various collections, the objects that carry a distinct connection with a particular time, person, or event hold the greatest personal significance for me. Special-date currency notes and visiting cards are particularly fascinating because they capture both time and identity.
Every collection contains certain objects that make you curious about the story behind them. For me, that curiosity is one of the greatest joys of collecting.

5. The Collector's Mindset
Collecting thousands of unique objects requires patience, research, and consistency. What has this journey taught you about observation, discipline, and perseverance that has also helped you in your professional life?

Collecting thousands of unique objects is, in itself, a test of patience and discipline. It has taught me not to overlook small details and to understand that observation and research are essential to discovering the true significance of something. This approach has also helped me in my professional life. Journalism and publishing similarly require attention to facts, verification, continuous learning, and the ability to work consistently toward a long-term objective.

6. Recognition on National & International Platforms
Your achievements have been recognized by platforms such as the Limca Book of Records, India Book of Records, Record Holders Republic, World Records India, and others. What does receiving such recognition mean to you beyond the award itself?

Being recognized by platforms such as the Limca Book of Records, India Book of Records, Record Holders Republic, World Records India, and others is certainly a matter of great pride for me. However, I value the journey that led to the recognition even more than the award itself. These records remind me that when a person has passion, consistency, and the willingness to do something different, their efforts can earn recognition on a much wider platform.

7. The Grand Achievers Award 2026
You have also received The Grand Achievers Award 2026. What did this recognition mean to you, and how do you believe awards influence an individual's responsibility toward society?

The Grand Achievers Award 2026 is not merely an honour for me; it represents a renewed sense of responsibility toward my work. I believe that recognition does not reduce a person's responsibility—it increases it. Awards inspire us to use our experience and achievements to contribute more positively to society.

8. Journalism Beyond News
As an editor and publisher, what, according to you, is the responsibility of modern media toward society? How can publications move beyond simply reporting information and contribute to awareness, education, and positive change?

The role of media today should not be limited to simply delivering news. Modern journalism should also become a medium for awareness, education, and constructive change. This is particularly important in medical and pharmaceutical journalism, where accuracy and credibility are extremely important. Our endeavour should be to provide readers with information that increases their knowledge and contributes to a more informed and positive society.

9. Connecting the Medical & Pharmaceutical Community
Through Medical Darpan and Pharma Darpan, you have created a platform connected with the medical and pharmaceutical sectors. What gap did you observe in the industry that motivated you to build this media platform?

The medical and pharmaceutical sectors are vast and continuously evolving. I felt there was a need to strengthen communication among professionals, institutions, industry, and society. Through Medical Darpan and Pharma Darpan, our effort has been to bridge this gap and create an effective communication platform for the medical and pharmaceutical community.

10. The Power of Documentation
You have spent years documenting both professional information and unique aspects of everyday life. Why do you believe documentation is important for future generations, and what should today's society preserve before it disappears?

Documentation is the collective memory of a society. Things that appear ordinary today can become valuable historical records in the future. In my view, we should systematically preserve our social life, professional achievements, publications, old documents, objects, photographs, and the changing culture of everyday life. Preserving these elements allows future generations to understand where we came from and how society evolved.

11. From Personal Passion to Public Legacy
At what point does a personal hobby become a legacy? Do you see your collections and publishing work primarily as personal achievements, or as something that should eventually be preserved and made accessible to future generations?

For me, the distinction between a hobby and a legacy disappears when a personal passion begins to benefit society and future generations. I do not view my collections and publishing work merely as personal achievements. My aspiration is to preserve and document them systematically so that future generations can learn from them and understand the society and culture of our time.

12. Social & Community Engagement
Your profile reflects association with several social, professional and community organizations. How has your involvement with different communities influenced your understanding of leadership and social responsibility

My association with different social, professional, and community organizations has helped me understand that leadership is not simply about making decisions. Leadership means taking people along, listening to them, and understanding one's responsibility toward society. Working with different communities has broadened my perspective and strengthened my understanding of social responsibility.

13. India Through the Eyes of a Collector
Having collected objects representing different aspects of Indian life, what changes in Indian society, culture and everyday life have you personally observed over the years?

As a collector, I have personally witnessed significant changes in Indian lifestyle, communication, packaging, advertising, business identity, and everyday objects. Technology has made our lives faster and increasingly digital, but this transformation has also resulted in many traditional things gradually disappearing. This is why preservation has become more important than ever.

14. The Next Chapter
What are the next major goals for Medical Darpan Media House and your collection journey? Are there any new museums, publications, digital initiatives or international collaborations that you would like to develop?

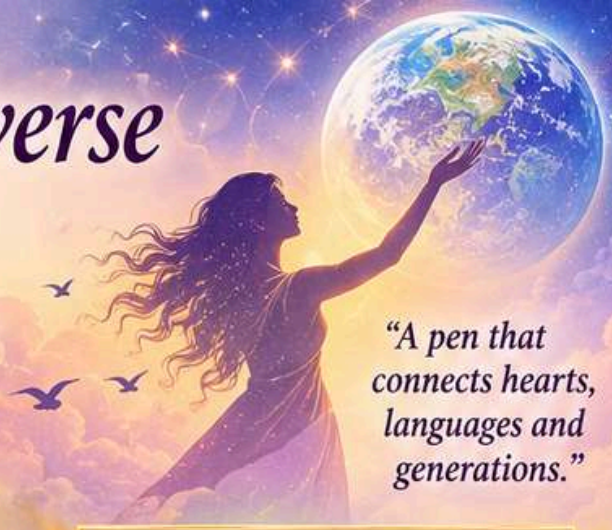
Going forward, my objective is to expand Medical Darpan Media House further and develop it as a strong and trusted platform for the medical and pharmaceutical community. At the same time, I want to work toward systematically preserving and documenting my collections. Exploring opportunities in museums, digital documentation, publications, and international collaborations will also remain among my future priorities.

15. A Message to the Next Generation
If a young person today wants to build something unusual—whether as a collector, entrepreneur, journalist, researcher or social contributor—what three principles would you want them to follow based on your own journey?

First—have the courage to create your own identity. It is easy to become part of the crowd, but doing something different is what creates a lasting identity.
Second—make consistency your companion. Great achievements do not happen overnight. Small efforts, when pursued consistently, eventually become significant accomplishments.
Third—do not keep your work only for yourself. Your knowledge, experience, and achievements should also become useful to society and future generations.
I believe true success is not only about what we achieve during our lifetime, but also about what our efforts, experiences, and ideas leave behind for society after us.

The Daughter of the Universe in the Sky of Letters

Dr. Vijayalakshmi Pandit —
A Creative Abode of Literary Dedication and the Grandeur of the Ghazal



"A pen that connects hearts, languages and generations."

Poet

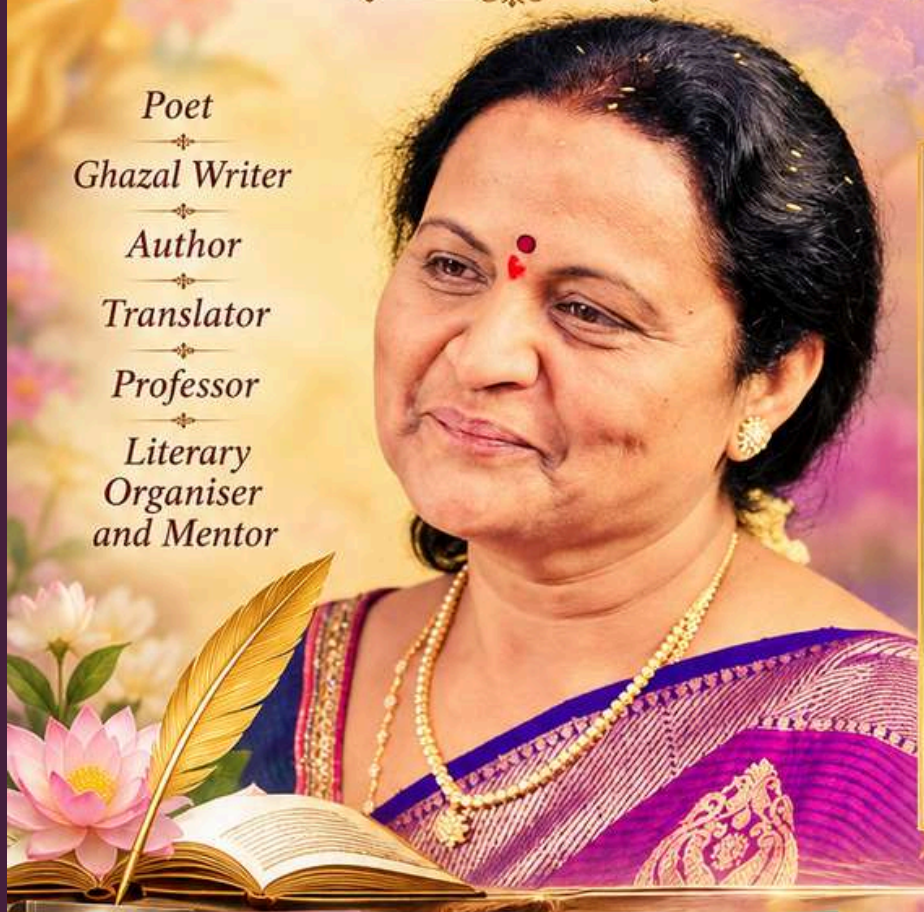
Ghazal Writer

Author

Translator

Professor

Literary Organiser and Mentor



Dr. Vijayalakshmi Pandit

- Ph.D. (Education), M.Sc. (Botany), Diploma in Distance Education, M.A., M.A. (Women's Studies)
- Professor – Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad (Distance Education)
- Chairperson & President Vishwaputrika Ghazal Foundation
- Multi-genre writer – Poetry, Short Stories, Ghazals, Translations

"Literature is the art of transforming one person's experience into another's and giving voice to the heartbeat of society."
— Dr. Vijayalakshmi Pandit



Selected Works

- *Yoga Rekhalu* (Ghazal Collection) – 2021
- *Raga Rekhalu* (Ghazal Collection) – 2022
- *Vishwa Ragam* (Ghazal Collection) – 2022
- *Hridayanjali* (Ghazal Collection) – 2024
- *Marmika* (Ghazal Collection) – 2026
- *Apoorva Gaanam* – Telugu Translation of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*
- *Poetry Is My Life* – 69 Telugu poems in English
- Many more poetry collections, short stories and translations

Awards & Recognitions

- Uttama Rachayitri Keerthi Award (Telugu University) – 2022 (Instituted in 2018)
- Sinare Award – 2024
- Amruthalatha Lifetime Achievement Award – 2023
- Raja Vasireddy Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award – 2022
- Sahitya Gaurav
- Sahitya Shree
- Leading Woman Writer & Editor Award
- and many more honours



Essay by
Mantri Pragada Markandeyulu
Author • Poet • Lyricist
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Hyderabad, India



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WRITE UPS....



KHUSHI

By: Mr. Piyush Goel- Mirror Image Man Of India

In the small town of Suratgarh lived a middle-class family that had been running its ancestral grocery and provisions business for generations. The family was well known in the town, and the Seth commanded great respect. His business flourished, and he had a son and a daughter. The Seth had a deep passion for cooking and feeding people. The townspeople often invited him to taste the food prepared for their functions and offer his suggestions. A dedicated businessman, he would wholeheartedly lend his time, effort, and support to ensure that every gathering and celebration was a success.

Seth was the eldest of three brothers. Each brother had his own house and shop, and by God's grace, all three families were prosperous and content.
Seth celebrated his elder son's wedding with great pomp and splendour. Some time later, he arranged his daughter's wedding as well.

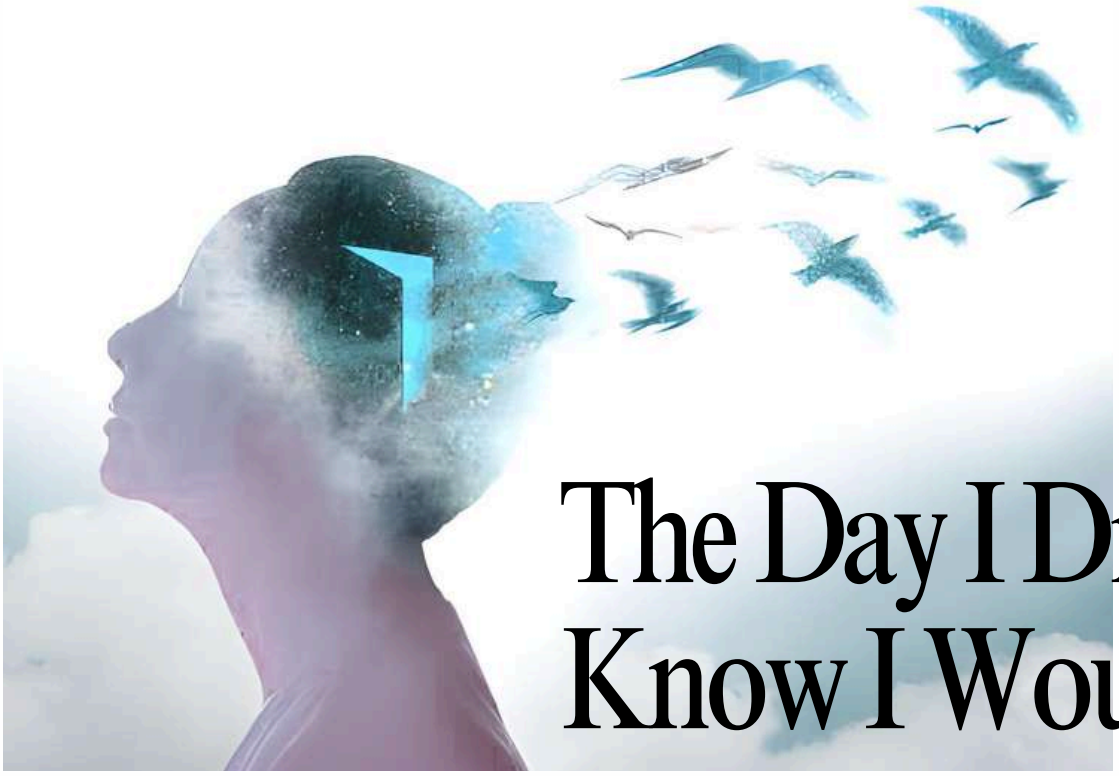
Life moved on, and the house remained filled with happiness.
One day, the Seth's son took his wife to the hospital, accompanied by his mother. As they waited, Seth's wife turned to her son and said anxiously,
"My son, I am feeling so restless. I cannot bear to see your wife suffering like this. I don't know what will happen."
Her son gently reassured her, saying,
"Mother, whatever happens will be for the best. Happiness is all that matters to us, whether we are blessed with a son or a daughter."
And then, happiness arrived in their home in the form of a little girl.

The Seths named their daughter Khushi, which means happiness.
From the day Khushi entered their lives, the family's home seemed to overflow with joy. What had once been a happy household became even happier. The Seths' business continued to grow, and today, nearly twenty to twenty-five people help manage it.
And now, little Khushi has grown up. Her father has begun looking for a suitable life partner for his beloved daughter, hoping to see her settled and happy in her own home.
Only the name of the town has been changed in this story. Everything else is true.
This is the story of a dear friend of mine.
One day, quite unexpectedly, I asked him, "Why did you name your daughter Khushi?"
He began telling me this very story. As he spoke, his voice trembled, and soon he broke down, crying uncontrollably. My own eyes filled with tears as I listened.
Through his tears, he said,

"After some time, my daughter, my Khushi, will leave our home and go to hers."
Because my friend is like a younger brother to me, I know his heart well. I understand what those words meant to him. He was not merely speaking about his daughter leaving home; he was expressing the ache of a father's heart, the love that makes every moment with a daughter precious, and the pain of knowing that one day, the little girl who brought so much happiness into his life will begin a new chapter of her own.
And truly, ever since Khushi came into their lives, she has brought nothing but happiness to her family.
A daughter is not merely a child born into a family. She is happiness wrapped in a little life, love that grows with every passing year, and a blessing that fills a home with countless reasons to smile.
A daughter means a family filled with happiness.
For every daughter is a Khushi.



By: Mr. Piyush Goel
Mirror Image Man Of India



The Day I Didn't Know I Would Miss

By : Mr. Shashidhar Kumar
Editor Panache Ink

I sometimes wonder how many beautiful days I have already lived without knowing they were beautiful. Not the days I remember clearly—the weddings, journeys, celebrations, achievements, or the days when something important happened. I mean the completely ordinary ones. The mornings that seemed to deserve no photograph. The afternoons that passed without an announcement. The evenings when someone said, "Come home early," and I assumed there would always be another evening in which to do so.

I think of those days now because growing older has a strange way of changing the value of things. What once seemed ordinary becomes precious. A particular voice calling from another room. The sound of a gate opening. The smell of food coming from the kitchen. A newspaper folded beside a cup of tea. Someone sitting in their usual chair. A familiar road taken so many times that I never thought to look at it. At the time, none of these things seemed worthy of remembering. Now, some of them are among the things I remember most.

When I think about childhood, I rarely remember the big events first. I remember mornings. There was usually some urgency to them. Someone was getting ready for school. Someone was looking for a book. Someone had misplaced a shoe. There was always one person who seemed to be ready before everyone else and another who was still looking for something five minutes after everyone should have left.

Breakfast happened in the middle of all this. Nobody sat down thinking, We should remember this moment. We were simply eating. Someone would ask a question. Someone would complain. Someone would remind someone else about something they had forgotten. There might be a newspaper on the table, its pages occasionally making that soft, dry sound as they turned. And then we would leave. At the time, I thought childhood was made up of holidays, examinations, festivals and summer vacations. Now I realise that childhood was mostly made of those mornings. The repeated ones.

The mornings that looked almost identical. The mornings I was sometimes impatient to escape. I could not have known then that one day I would miss precisely what I once found routine. That is perhaps the first lesson memory teaches us—not everything that matters announces its importance.

There are people whose presence becomes so woven into our daily lives that we stop noticing it. A parent asking whether we have eaten. A friend calling at nearly the same time every week. A neighbour appearing at the gate. A relative telling the same story at every family gathering. We may even become mildly irritated by these repetitions.
Why does he always tell this story?
Why does she ask the same question?
Why does someone always insist that we eat one more piece?
Why must they call now?
We don't know that one day repetition will become absence. And absence is terribly precise. It knows exactly what is missing. When someone is no longer there, you begin noticing all the small spaces they occupied without ever asking permission.

The empty chair.
The untouched cup.
The silence at a particular hour.
The absence of a question that used to annoy you.
You discover that a person was not only a person. They were also a collection of sounds, habits, interruptions, gestures, and ordinary inconveniences. And when they are gone, you miss all of it. Even the things you once wished they would stop doing. I have often noticed that old photographs do something strange to time. You look at one and immediately begin searching the faces.
Who was there?
What were we doing?
Where were we going?
What happened before the photograph?
What happened afterwards?
But sometimes the photograph raises a more unsettling question:
Did they know?
Did the people in that picture know that they were standing inside a moment they would someday desperately want to return to?
Probably not. They were probably thinking about something else. Someone may have been worried about money. Someone may have been tired. Someone may have been irritated with another person. Someone may have been wondering when the photographer would finally finish.

That is what makes the photograph so moving. Everyone in it is still living forward. We, looking at it years later, are living backward. We know what they don't. We know who left. We know which house was sold. We know which relationships changed. We know which voices eventually became memories. They did not. They were simply there. And perhaps that is why I sometimes look at old photographs longer than I intend to.
I am not really looking at the photograph.
I am looking at a version of life that did not yet know it was temporary.

There must have been a last time for almost everything that once felt permanent. The last time I walked a familiar road without wondering whether it would still look the same years later. The last time a certain group of people sat together.

The last time someone called me by a childhood name. The last time a parent waited for me to come home. The last time a friend and I spoke without having to schedule the conversation weeks in advance. The last time a particular room was full of voices. The last time I entered a house that would later belong to someone else. The strange thing is that I remember none of these as last times. There was no music. No pause. No voice telling me, Look carefully. This will not happen again. That is how endings usually happen. Quietly.

We leave one ordinary day and enter another, and somewhere between them, something has ended. Perhaps that is why memory sometimes feels less like a library and more like a house with rooms we accidentally discover.
A smell opens one door.
A song opens another.
A railway station.
A winter afternoon.
The sound of utensils.
A particular kind of sunlight.
Suddenly, without warning, we are back.
Not in the important moment.
In the ordinary one.

I sometimes think we misunderstand what it means to miss someone. We say, "I miss him." Or, "I miss her." But often what we really miss is the world that existed when that person was in it. We miss having someone to call. We miss knowing where they would sit. We miss the question they always asked. We miss their particular way of entering a room.

We miss the small disagreement that used to happen at dinner. We miss being expected. We miss the certainty that tomorrow would contain them. That last one may be the hardest. When someone is part of our ordinary life, we quietly assume there will be another conversation.
Another meal.
Another visit.
Another opportunity to say what we forgot to say today.
That assumption is so ordinary that we rarely recognise it as a privilege. Until it disappears.

Perhaps this is why I have become more interested in ordinary days as I grow older. Not because I have stopped caring about extraordinary ones. I still love celebrations. I still understand the excitement of journeys, achievements and new beginnings. But there is something about an ordinary day that feels almost unbearably tender once you realise how temporary it is. A morning when everyone is home. A cup of tea shared without ceremony. A child complaining about having to go somewhere. A parent asking a question you have answered a hundred times. A friend sitting beside you without either of you needing to say anything important. The afternoon light falling across a familiar wall. The sound of someone laughing in the next room. Nothing remarkable. And yet, perhaps, everything.

We spend so much of our lives waiting for the next thing that we sometimes fail to inhabit the thing that is already here. We eat while looking at a screen. We talk while thinking about the next appointment. We visit people while checking the time. We photograph places before experiencing them. We hurry through ordinary days because we assume there will be plenty more. Usually, there are. But not always. And we never know which is which.

I don't think this means we should become afraid of ordinary life. Quite the opposite. If we tried to treat every morning as though it were our last, we might become too conscious of endings to enjoy beginnings. Life cannot be lived permanently in remembrance. We have to rush sometimes. We have to be distracted. We have to complain about traffic, answer messages, miss trains, burn toast, and arrive late. We have to live as though tomorrow is coming. That is part of being human.

But perhaps, every now and then, we can stop. Not dramatically. Just for a moment. We can listen when someone is telling us a story we have already heard.
We can sit a little longer at the table. We can look at the face across from us instead of the phone in our hand. We can notice the sound of rain against the window. We can take the familiar road without assuming that familiarity makes it insignificant.

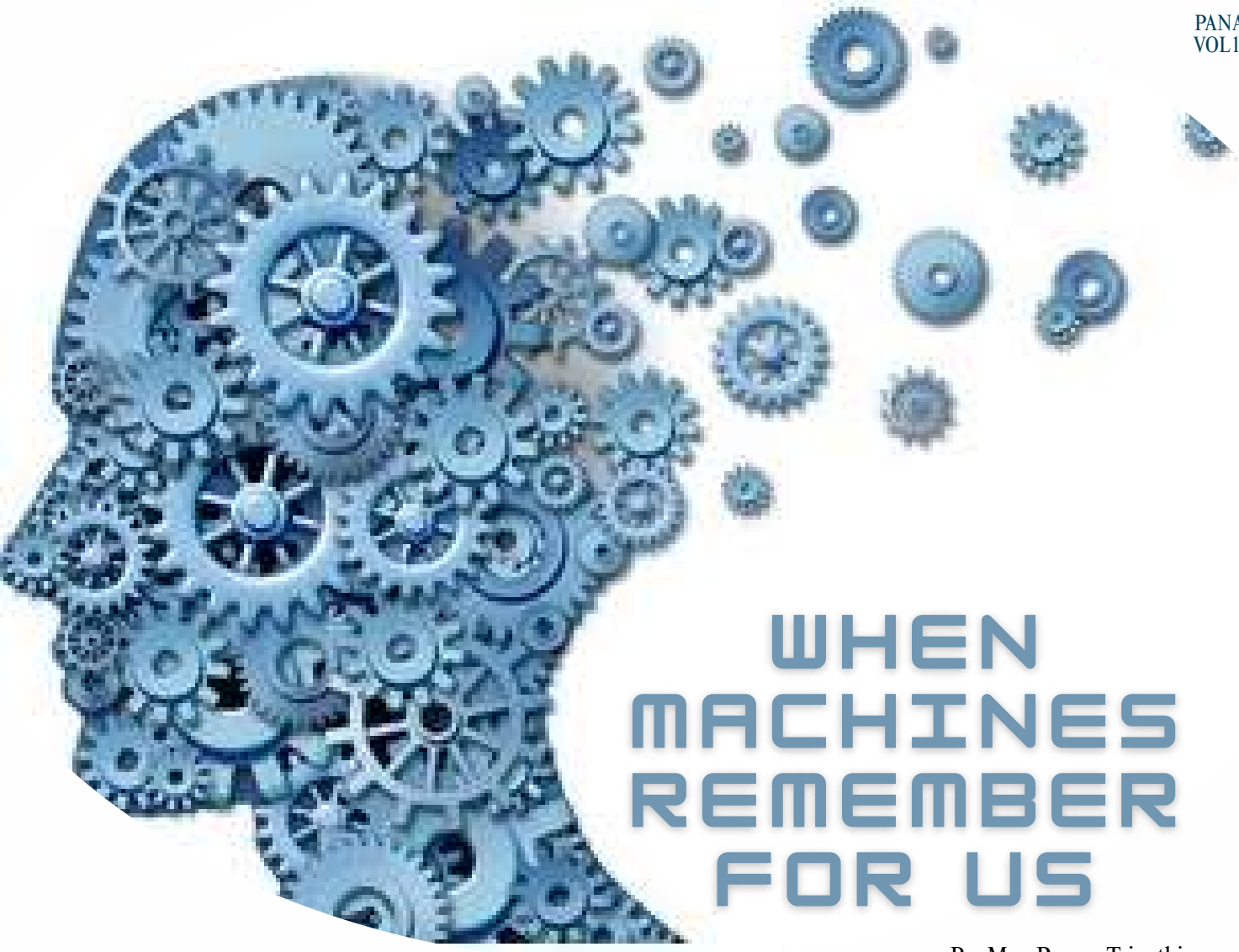
We can ask someone how they really are. We can call the person we have been meaning to call. Not because we know that today is special. But because it isn't. And that may be exactly why it is.

Sometimes I imagine that somewhere in the future, I will remember an ordinary day from now. I won't know which one. Perhaps it will be a day I am currently treating as unimportant. Maybe I will remember the people who were around me. Maybe I will remember what the room looked like. Maybe I will remember a conversation that seems forgettable today. Maybe I will remember a particular afternoon light. Or perhaps I will remember absolutely nothing remarkable—only the feeling of being surrounded by people and things that, at the time, I assumed would always be there.

And if that happens, I hope I will understand what I understand now. That life does not usually tell us when it is giving us something for the last time.
The last breakfast may look exactly like every breakfast before it. The last conversation may sound completely ordinary. The last walk home may be just another walk. The last evening together may contain an argument about something trivial.

The last photograph may be badly framed. The last goodbye may not even feel like goodbye. We only understand later. Much later. When the day has already become memory.

Perhaps this is what makes an ordinary day beautiful. Not that something extraordinary happens. Not that we recognise its importance. But that we don't.
We wake up believing there will be another morning. We pour the tea. We answer the phone. We complain about the weather. We leave the house. We say, "See you later."
And life continues.
Somewhere, without our permission, the ordinary becomes the unforgettable. One day, years from now, we may look back and realise that what we called an ordinary Tuesday was actually one of the beautiful days of our lives. We simply didn't have the wisdom to recognise it then. And perhaps that is all we can really do now:
Look a little more carefully.
Stay a little longer.
Listen when the familiar voice speaks.
Notice the hands across the table.
Notice the light in the room.
Notice who is still here.
Because the beautiful ordinary day does not arrive wearing a name. It does not ask to be remembered. It simply happens. And while we are busy waiting for life to become something else, it quietly becomes the life we will one day wish we could return to.
Perhaps today is one of those days.
Perhaps, without knowing it,
we are already living it.



WHEN MACHINES REMEMBER FOR US

By: Mrs. Pragya Tripathi
Editor, Panache Ink

"If a machine can remember our past perfectly, will we still need stories to make sense of it?"

Once upon a time, human memory was a fragile, creative, and deeply forgiving faculty. We forgot birthdays, misremembered the exact shade of blue on a childhood bedroom wall, lost old paper letters to damp basements, and allowed time to blur the sharp edges of our grief and joy. In that necessary, biological forgetting, the human mind performed a quiet, essential alchemy. It edited, softened, mythologized, and filtered our personal histories, transforming raw, chaotic data into a cohesive internal narrative. We relied on stories because our recollections were inherently incomplete, leaving fertile gaps that imagination and emotional need were forced to fill.

Consider the texture of modern daily life. A young professional wakes up, reaches for her smartphone, and receives a notification from a cloud photo service: "Memories from this exact day seven years ago." A screen lights up, displaying a crisp, high-definition photograph of a college trip to a hill station, complete with friends who have long since drifted across different continents. She did not have to search through dusty photo albums or coax the memory out of the fading archives of her own mind; the algorithm surfaced it unbidden, precise down to the geographical coordinate and the timestamp

Or consider an evening conversation between two old friends scrolling through WhatsApp or iMessage history. When a debate arises about whether it rained during a specific trip in 2019, nobody pauses to think or argue. Someone instantly taps a search bar, scrolls back through seven years of archived chat logs, and pulls up a timestamped photograph and a text message: "Caught in a downpour near the market." The digital record settles the dispute with mathematical authority, robbing the two friends of the playful negotiation of memory, the gentle disagreements, and the subjective storytelling that used to characterize shared reminiscence. These real-world instances highlight a profound shift in how we inhabit our past. We no longer carry our histories inside us as living, malleable narratives; we store them on remote servers, in cloud albums, and within searchable database logs.

Today, our past is aggressively, flawlessly, and relentlessly preserved. Automated video montages stitch our milestones together with cheerful, algorithmically selected soundtracks. Search histories track our most fleeting, shameful, or desperate curiosities down to the millisecond, while messaging apps archive every fragmented thought, draft, and deleted sentence. We have effectively outsourced our nostalgia to massive server farms and invisible background algorithms. We no longer need to summon the mental courage to remember a date, a geographical coordinate, or a forgotten face; a pocket-sized device will retrieve it with absolute, unfeeling precision in fractions of a second.

This permanent digital archive fundamentally alters the psychological architecture of human remembrance. When a hard drive holds every snapshot, text string, and digital footprint of a season, does the human mind relax its grip on its own history? Privacy, intimacy, and the cultural meaning of forgetting are quietly being reshaped in an era where an artificial intelligence knows our personal timeline better than our closest companions. If a machine can store every voice note, geotag, and archived chat log, the heavy burden of preservation shifts entirely from the human heart to the microchip. We no longer have to carry our dead; our devices carry them for us, flashing their digital likenesses across screens with disquieting regularity

We live surrounded by the artifacts of a digitized existence. Every browser query, location ping, playlist stream, and geotagged snapshot is quietly cataloged into an endless ledger. In eras past, time acted as a natural filter. Embarrassments faded, minor griefs softened into background noise, and details dissolved into broad emotional strokes. Today, nothing is truly lost unless explicitly deleted, and even then, digital debris often lingers in hidden caches and server backups.

Consider the modern phenomenon of digital estate management and posthumous profiles on social networks. When an individual passes away, their profiles often remain active, transformed into digital shrines where algorithms continue to prompt friends with "On this day" reminders or birthday notifications for someone who is no longer breathing. This creates a strange, uncanny emotional landscape where the dead maintain a ghostly, automated presence. Loved ones receive notifications urging them to "Say happy birthday" to a departed parent or friend. The machine remembers the date with absolute precision, but it lacks the wisdom to understand the pain that such a prompt inflicts.

Furthermore, search histories and message archives trap us in loops of our former selves. If we look up a symptom, an old heartbreak, or an outdated ambition, our digital footprints remain visible, weaponized by recommendation engines and algorithms designed to monetize our nostalgia or anxieties. We are tethered to every past version of who we were, denied the grace of reinventing ourselves in private.

Yet, a data point is not a memory, and a digital file is not an emotion. A server can store ten thousand high-definition photographs of a summer afternoon, but it cannot capture the heavy, suffocating heat of the air, the exact timbre of a voice that has since changed, or the complex emotional weight of a turning point in a relationship.

Think of a voice note left by a grandparent who has passed away. The audio file is preserved indefinitely in the cloud, ready to be played back at the tap of a screen. Yet, listening to that recording does not invoke the organic, shifting warmth of remembering their cadence from within; instead, it confronts us with an unalterable ghost locked inside silicon. The machine remembers the exact frequencies and decibels, but it lacks the human capacity to miss them. Technology can archive what happened with mathematical perfection, but only human consciousness can decide what it actually meant.

The paradox of our hyper-recorded age is that while we possess more data about our lives than any previous generation in history, we often feel less connected to the deep meaning of our experiences. When every moment is recorded, cataloged, and instantly retrievable, the act of reflection is short-circuited. We check the photo instead of dwelling on the feeling; we replay the voice note instead of searching our hearts for the lesson left behind.

As machines become the permanent custodians of our personal histories, the true challenge of the modern age is ensuring that we do not let artificial remembrance replace the messy, internal narrative that makes our lives uniquely our own. We must return from the cold precision of technology to the vital, beating heart of the human need to give meaning to what has been remembered. Stories are not mere containers of facts; they are the living spaces where we process who we are, why we loved, and how we survived.

Now, **Pause and Think.....**
When you scroll past that unbidden digital memory on your screen today- the exact photograph, the archived text, the timestamped proof of a moment you lived years ago- what is it that you choose to feel: the cold accuracy of the file, or the warm, untamed story you built around it yourself?



A LANGUAGE OF HOME

By: Mr. Rahul Chaurase

We usually think of home as a place: a house, a room, a street we know without looking at a map, somewhere we can return to after being away. The definition is simple enough, but the feeling is not. Sometimes home remains even after the place is gone. A house can be demolished, a family can move, a city can change so much that the street we remember becomes unfamiliar, and people can grow older or disappear from our lives. Yet something about those places continues to exist inside us,

Maybe home is not really a place. Maybe it is a language, and like every language, we learn it before we understand what it means. We learn it through the names people give familiar streets, the expressions spoken around the dinner table, and the voices that call us home. Long after we leave, these words can return us to the places where we first heard them.

As children, we do not think about home. We simply live inside it. We know the sound of a particular door opening, recognise someone's footsteps from another room, know which cupboard contains the things we are not supposed to touch, and recognise the smell of food being cooked before we see it. None of this seems important at the time, which is probably why we remember it. The things that shape us are often the things we never thought to remember.

We do not know that an ordinary evening may be an ordinary evening for the last time. We do not know that one day we might miss a room we once wanted to leave, or that the voice calling us for dinner will eventually become a memory. When we are young, life feels continuous. Tomorrow seems almost guaranteed. Growing older is partly the discovery that it is not.

This discovery rarely arrives as one dramatic moment. It comes quietly, through small changes that we almost fail to notice. A familiar person looks older, a childhood friend moves away, a shop disappears from the street, or we return to a place and realise that it feels smaller than we remember. Nothing has necessarily gone wrong. Time has simply continued doing what it always does: changing things without asking whether we are ready.

Perhaps this is one of the first difficult truths of adulthood: the world does not preserve itself for our memories. We are the ones who preserve parts of it.

That is where memory becomes strange. We often imagine memory as a storage system, as if the past is kept somewhere inside us exactly as it happened. But memory does not work that way. We forget conversations, rearrange details, lose entire years, and sometimes remember a five-second moment with impossible clarity. What remains is rarely the complete event. It is usually a feeling: a certain afternoon, a particular smell, the colour of sunlight on a wall, or the sound of someone laughing in another room. We may not remember what happened that day, but we remember that we were happy, and sometimes that is enough.

This is why home has a language of its own. It is not made from important statements but from small repetitions. “Have you eaten?” “Come inside.” “Be careful.” Years later, hearing one of those phrases in a familiar voice can bring back not just the person, but the room, the hour of the day, and the feeling of being there.

“Where were you?” “Take an umbrella.” On the surface, these are ordinary sentences, but their meaning depends on who says them. A stranger asking whether you have eaten is simply asking a question. Someone at home asking the same thing can mean, I noticed you were not here. I was thinking about you.
Language carries memory because people give words their emotional meaning. We do not only remember what people said; we remember how they made ordinary words feel.

This becomes clearer when we leave. Distance has a strange relationship with memory because, when we are close to something, we often fail to notice its value. Familiarity makes things invisible. The street we walked every day becomes just a street, the meal cooked every week becomes just food, and the people we see every morning become part of the background of life. Then we leave, and suddenly the background becomes the subject
.
We begin searching for familiar food in unfamiliar cities, notice accents we would have ignored before, and become strangely happy when someone uses an expression from our childhood. In a city far from home, hearing someone speak with the accent of our childhood can make an unfamiliar street feel briefly like our own.

We hear an old song and, for a few minutes, our present life becomes less important than a life we thought we had outgrown. A familiar accent or an old local expression can do the same: for a moment, a distant street or a childhood kitchen seems close again.
Distance does not necessarily make us sentimental; it makes us observant. We start seeing what was always there.

But there is another problem with remembering: the home we remember may not have existed exactly as we imagine it. Memory edits. It removes certain arguments and keeps certain laughs, makes some summers seem longer than they were, and turns ordinary people into almost mythical figures because we no longer see them every day. Sometimes we are not missing the past itself. We are missing our version of it.

This is an uncomfortable thought because it means that when we say, “I want to go back,” we may actually be asking for something impossible. We may want to return not only to a place but to the person we were when that place still had its old meaning. But that person does not exist anymore. Even if the house is still standing, we cannot enter it with the same mind. The child who once lived there has become someone else.

Maybe this is why returning home can sometimes feel disappointing. We expect the place to give us back something that only time could have taken. The walls cannot do that. No place can.There is something almost absurd about this. We spend years trying to move forward and then spend other years trying to understand what we left behind. We want freedom from the places that shaped us, and later we miss the very things we once considered ordinary. We want independence and belonging, change and familiarity, the freedom to become new people and the comfort of remaining connected to who we were.

Perhaps this contradiction does not need to be solved. Human beings are full of contradictions, and maturity may not be about choosing one side but learning to live with both.
This is where home becomes more interesting than nostalgia.

If home were only about the past, then growing up would mean losing it. But that is not what happens. We carry certain parts forward. A person who grew up around a particular way of speaking may carry those expressions into another city. Someone may cook the food they grew up eating for people who have never tasted it before. Someone may keep a habit because it reminds them of a parent or arrange a room in a certain way without knowing exactly why.

The past survives through repetition, although never perfectly and often without our conscious intention.
This is perhaps where adulthood begins to become a creative act. We are not only products of the homes we came from; we also decide what parts of them deserve to continue. A home gives us a language, but it does not decide everything we will say with it. We can speak differently, create new meanings, and build a life that does not look like the one we were given.

That does not necessarily mean rejecting the past. Sometimes the strongest way of carrying something forward is to transform it.
A person may grow up believing that home means a particular house and later realise that home can be created with people who were strangers at the beginning. A city can become familiar, a new room can become important, and a friend can become family. The language changes, but the need to belong remains.
Perhaps belonging is not simply finding a place where we fit. Sometimes it is the decision to participate: to stay for dinner, call someone, learn how another person takes their coffee, or remember something they told you last week. These actions look almost meaningless when separated from one another, but together they create a life.

We often search for meaning in large things because large things are easier to recognise. We want a purpose that can be explained in one sentence, something that can justify our existence and tell us what all of this is supposed to lead toward. But ordinary life rarely gives such clean answers. Most days are made of repetition: waking up, working, eating, talking, waiting, and sleeping before beginning again.
There is no dramatic explanation attached to any of it.
Perhaps that is exactly why small acts matter.

When life does not provide meaning automatically, we give meaning to what we choose to care about. A meal becomes important because someone prepared it for us. A room becomes important because certain years happened inside it. A person becomes important because we decided, again and again, to be present in their life.

Meaning does not always arrive as a revelation. Sometimes it accumulates, one ordinary moment after another.

This may be why the language of home is so difficult to translate. A place is preserved not only in photographs or memories, but also in its names, accents, sayings, and the voices that once filled it.
You can describe it, but description is not the same as experience. You can explain why a particular smell reminds you of childhood, but another person will never experience that smell in exactly the same way. The meaning belongs partly to you because it was created through time.

That is what makes memory valuable. It gives private meaning to things that are publicly ordinary. A particular street is just a street to everyone else, but to you it may contain ten years of your life. A particular song is just a song, but to you it may contain a person. A particular sentence is just a sentence, but to you it may be the voice of someone who is no longer there.

The world does not know what these things mean.
You do.
Maybe that is one of the strange responsibilities of being alive: to notice what becomes meaningful to us even when the rest of the world cannot see it.

We cannot keep everything. The people we love will change, places will disappear, our memories will become less reliable, and one day even the things we are trying so hard to remember may become difficult to describe. But perhaps the purpose of remembering was never to preserve everything. It was simply to recognise that something mattered.

A home does not need to remain untouched for its meaning to survive. The house can change, the people can change, and we can change with them. The meaning can change too. Perhaps that is not a failure of memory but simply the nature of being alive.

We are always leaving something behind while carrying something forward. Every new place contains a little of the old one, and every new version of ourselves contains traces of earlier versions. We do not begin again from zero. We continue.

And perhaps that is what home finally means: not a permanent refuge from the uncertainty of life, but the collection of things that taught us how to recognise belonging.
We learn that language early, usually before we have the words to explain it. We learn it through a voice from another room, food waiting on the table, a familiar road, or someone asking when we will come back. Years later, we may understand what those words were carrying-the sound of a home and the people who once filled it.

They were never promising that nothing would change. They were simply telling us that, for a certain period of time, we were not alone.



THE ART OF NOT SAYING EVERYTHING

- Mr. Kartik Srivastava
Editor, Panache Ink

Communication is the most important tool in a human's life, sharing his or her feelings to others, grasping knowledge and the foundation behind the working of any organisation. Communication may be verbal or non verbal, although it's a fact that we do non verbal communication more than the verbal one but still, verbal communication remains an important way to put out our points and ideas to the world in an easier and more creative manner. But, interestingly, we have been becoming strangely uncomfortable with silence. The moment a conversation pauses, we reach for our phones. When someone says, “Nothing,” we ask again, “Are you sure?” When a relationship becomes complicated, we want explanations, definitions and closure. We have slowly begun to believe that everything we feel must eventually find its way into words.

But perhaps it doesn't. Perhaps some feelings are meant to remain unfinished sentences. There is a peculiar kind of pressure today to explain ourselves completely. We explain why we were hurt, why we withdrew, why we did not reply, why we changed our minds. We document our lives, narrate our experiences and turn private emotions into public vocabulary. Even vulnerability sometimes comes with an expectation of disclosure - if you care, explain, if you love, express it, if you are hurt, say exactly why.
Yet there is an art in knowing that not everything needs to be said. Not because feelings do not matter, but because they do.

Some emotions are so sensitive and delicate that putting them into words can make them feel smaller. A mother's quiet concern while watching her child leave home. The hesitation before saying goodbye to someone we know we may never see again. The relief of sitting beside someone without having to fill the silence. These moments do not necessarily need an explanation. They simply need to be felt.
We often confuse silence with the absence of communication. But silence has its own vocabulary.

A friend who notices that you are unusually quiet and simply sits beside you is communicating something. A parent who leaves your favourite food on the table without asking what is wrong is communicating something. Someone remembering a small detail you mentioned months ago is saying, in their own way, “I listened.”

Not every expression of care arrives as a sentence. Sometimes, it arrives as a presence.
And perhaps this is what we forget in a world obsessed with articulation. We assume that the more we say, the more honestly we communicate. But communication is not measured by volume of words. There are things that can be said in a paragraph and things that can be understood in a glance.
There is also a difference between not saying everything and not saying anything. The former can be wisdom; the latter can become avoidance, ignorance and sometimes arrogance.
Not saying everything does not mean hiding important truths, manipulating people, or refusing necessary conversations. It does not mean allowing resentment to grow silently or expecting others to read our minds. There are moments when speaking is an act of courage, and silence would only deepen the wound.
But there are also moments when we speak simply because we cannot tolerate the discomfort of leaving something unresolved.
We demand explanations even when an explanation will not change the outcome. We ask, "Why did you do this?" when perhaps what we really want is for the answer to hurt less. We insist on closure when what we actually need is acceptance. And sometimes, no explanation is going to give us what we are looking for. Growing up, perhaps, is partly a way towards learning this distinction.

There was a time when I believed that being honest meant saying everything. Every disappointment had to be expressed. Every misunderstanding had to be clarified. Every emotion deserved a conversation. But with time, I have begun to understand that honesty and complete disclosure are not the same thing. We are allowed to have private corners within ourselves. Not every thought needs an audience. Not every feeling needs a name. Not every experience needs to become a story that someone else can consume. There is a thin line difference between privacy and secrecy. Privacy is not secrecy.
There is something deeply human about keeping a few things for yourself not because you are ashamed of them, but because they belong to you.

A memory can remain yours. A feeling can remain unnamed.
Perhaps this is especially difficult today because we are surrounded by the language of instant expression. We are encouraged to share, post, react, respond and explain. Even our silences are sometimes interpreted. A delayed reply becomes a message. A missing 'like' becomes evidence. A short answer becomes an attitude. We have started reading between lines that may not even exist.
In such a world, choosing not to say everything can become an act of quiet resistance.
It can mean refusing to turn every emotion into content. It can mean allowing yourself to feel something before deciding what it means.

It can mean accepting that some relationships do not need constant verbal reassurance to be real. Think of the people with whom silence feels comfortable.
There is usually a special intimacy in those relationships. You can sit across from each other without performing. You can spend an afternoon doing entirely different things in the same room. You do not have to constantly prove that you are enjoying yourself, that you care, or that everything is fine.

Moreover, the silence does not feel empty. It feels safe. Perhaps that is one of the truest forms of intimacy- to be with someone without needing to constantly explain your existence to them. But there is another, quieter reason for learning the art of not saying everything: people change, and so do feelings. The anger we feel at midnight may look different in the morning. The words we want to send in the heat of an argument may become words we desperately wish we could take back. The judgment we form from one moment may seem unfair when we understand the whole story.

A pause gives emotions time to settle. Sometimes the wisest response is not the most immediate one.

Sometimes it is the message we choose not to send.
Sometimes it is the accusation we replace with a question. Sometimes it is the argument we leave for tomorrow. Silence, in these moments, is not weakness. It is emotional discipline.
It gives us the option to ask: Do I want to be understood, or do I simply want to be heard? Do I want to solve this, or do I want someone else to feel the pain I am feeling? Those questions can change everything. And yet, perhaps the most beautiful things we leave unsaid are not the angry words but the tender ones. The “I missed you” hidden inside a cup of tea. The “Take care” disguised as a reminder to carry an umbrella. The “I am proud of you” in a parent's eyes. The “I am still here” is a friend's decision to stay. We sometimes imagine that love must be loud to be real. But much of love is ordinary, almost invisible. It lives in remembered preferences, repeated gestures and small acts that nobody applauds. There are people who will never give us grand speeches about how much they care.
They will simply show up. And perhaps we should learn to recognise that language too.

The art of not saying everything is ultimately not an art of silence. It is an art of discernment. Knowing when a truth needs to be spoken. Knowing when an apology matters. Knowing when someone deserves an explanation. Knowing when a boundary needs a voice. And knowing when a feeling can simply be held. Because we do not owe the world access to every room inside us. Some rooms can remain quiet.
Some stories can remain unfinished. Some feelings can exist without becoming declarations.
And maybe, that is not emotional distance at all. Maybe, it is maturity. Maybe, it is tenderness.
Maybe, it is finally understanding that words are precious precisely because we do not have to spend all of them.
So, the next time you find yourself reaching for an explanation, pause for a moment. Ask yourself whether the feeling needs to be spoken- or simply felt. Because sometimes the most honest thing we can say is nothing. And sometimes, in that quiet space between what we feel and what we choose to say, we finally hear ourselves.



The Stories That Never Ended

By : Mr. Shashidhar Kumar
Editor Panache Ink

There are things in my life that I never finished. Some are easy to remember.

A book with a bookmark still somewhere in the middle. A letter I began writing and never sent. A conversation I postponed because I thought there would be another opportunity.
A plan that was always going to happen "sometime." There are also things whose endings I cannot even identify.

A friendship that slowly became silence.
A place I left thinking I would return.
A dream I kept postponing until the right time.
Perhaps most lives contain such things.

We speak about unfinished business as though it were a problem to be solved. We imagine that every loose end should eventually be tied, every story given a proper ending, every door either closed or walked through. But life is rarely so orderly.
Some things simply stop.
Not dramatically.
They fade.

A conversation becomes less frequent. A visit gets postponed. A plan is moved to next month and then next year. A person becomes busy. Another person waits. Eventually, nobody knows exactly when the story ended. Sometimes I wonder whether the things we leave unfinished remain somewhere inside us precisely because they never received an ending.

I have a book somewhere that I once meant to finish. I remember beginning it with enthusiasm. I remember the first pages, perhaps even the place where I stopped. The bookmark has probably remained there for years, holding open a story that continued without me. The strange thing is that I have finished hundreds of other books since then. Why, then, do I remember that unfinished one?
Perhaps because finishing a book closes something.
An unfinished book remains open in the imagination.

The characters are still somewhere inside those pages. Their lives have not entirely concluded for me. The story has been interrupted rather than completed. There is something strangely human about that. We seem to remember interruptions more sharply than conclusions. A completed journey becomes a destination. An unfinished journey remains a possibility.

Maybe that is why an abandoned book can occupy a corner of the mind for years. It is not merely a book anymore. It has become a small monument to a version of ourselves who once intended to continue.

There are friendships like that too. Not every friendship ends with an argument. Some simply become quieter. At first, the gap between conversations is a few days. Then a few weeks. Then months. You notice that you have not spoken, but you don't call because you assume the other person is busy.

Perhaps they are thinking the same thing. Then enough time passes that calling suddenly feels like an event. You wonder what you would say. "It's been a long time." That sentence seems too obvious. "I'm sorry I didn't call." That makes the silence sound like someone's fault.
"How have you been?"
That question feels almost too large for a phone call. And so you don't call. The friendship does not officially end. There is no final conversation. No accusation. No goodbye. There is simply a space where something used to be.

I have often wondered how many friendships in our lives end this way—not because affection disappears, but because life becomes crowded with other things.
Work.
Family.
Distance.
Responsibilities.
Time.
And perhaps a little pride. We tell ourselves that we will reconnect. Sometimes we do. Sometimes we don't. The unfinished friendship remains somewhere in memory, not quite alive and not quite gone.

There are also words we leave unsaid. These may be the most difficult unfinished things to carry.
We think we have time.
That is usually the reason.
We can say it tomorrow.
We can call next week.
We can explain later.
We can apologise when things have settled down.
We can tell someone what they meant to us when the moment is right.

But the right moment is an unreliable thing. Sometimes it never arrives. I have had conversations in my head that never happened in real life. I have imagined beginning them many times. Sometimes I know exactly what I would say. Sometimes I have even rehearsed the first sentence. But life has a way of moving before we are ready. And then the words remain ours alone. Perhaps everyone carries a few sentences that exist nowhere except inside them.
An apology.
A thank-you.
A confession.
A question.
An expression of love.
A simple "I remember."
The older I become, the more I understand that some words do not become less important because they were never spoken. They become heavier.
There are dreams that we abandon quietly too. As children, we imagine our future with extraordinary confidence.
We will become this.
We will go there.
We will write that book.
We will build that house.
We will learn that instrument.
We will travel to that place.
We will become the person we imagine ourselves to be.

Then adulthood begins. Life introduces its practical vocabulary.
Salary.
Rent.
Responsibilities.
Family.
Deadlines.
Illness.
Distance.
Bills.
The dream does not necessarily disappear. It simply moves further down the list.
Next year, perhaps.
After this project.
When the children grow up.
When there is more money.
When there is more time.
When life becomes less complicated.

And then one day we discover that "later" has become a surprisingly permanent address. I don't think every abandoned dream is a failure. Some dreams belong to a particular age. Some were never truly ours. Some were borrowed from our parents, our friends, society, or the person we thought we were supposed to become. And some dreams remain quietly alive even after years of neglect.
The difficult part is knowing the difference. I sometimes think about the places we leave behind.
A house.
A neighbourhood.
A school.
A city.
A room.

A particular street where we once knew every shopkeeper. We leave believing that a place remains available to us. We say, "I'll come back." Sometimes we do.
But the place is never quite the same. Or perhaps we are not. The tea shop has changed. The old tree has been cut down. The house has been painted. The road has become wider.

Someone else lives behind the window where we once lived. And suddenly we realise that returning is not the same as going back. The physical place may still exist, but the life we associate with it does not. That life has become another unfinished story. I think this is one of the quietest forms of loss.
Not losing a place, exactly.
Losing the version of yourself who belonged there.

There are photographs that capture unfinished lives. A photograph of someone standing beside a suitcase. A family picture taken before a separation. Two friends laughing before they stopped speaking. A young person holding a degree before choosing another path. Someone standing outside a house they would soon leave forever. We look at such photographs with knowledge the people inside them did not possess.
We know what happened afterward.
They didn't.
That is the strange privilege—and sadness—of looking backward.
Every photograph contains a future that was invisible at the moment it was taken.
We see the beginning.
We know the ending.
But sometimes there was no ending at all.
Only interruption.
Only change.
Only life moving in another direction.

Perhaps that is why I have become suspicious of the idea of closure. We like the word because it promises neatness. Closure suggests that one day we will understand.
We will forgive.
We will accept.
We will stop wondering.
We will put the past in its proper place and move forward without looking back.
But I am not sure human beings work that way. Some things become easier to live with without becoming completely resolved.
Some questions remain questions.
Some people remain important even after they are no longer present.
Some memories retain their ache.
Some choices continue to make us wonder what might have happened if we had chosen differently.

Perhaps maturity is not always about finding the final answer. Perhaps sometimes it is learning to live beside the question.
There is one particular kind of unfinished story that interests me most. The story that could have been. We all carry a few of these.
The job we didn't take.
The city we didn't move to.
The person we didn't marry.
The book we didn't write.
The journey we didn't make.
The conversation we didn't have.
The chance we didn't take.

We cannot know what those alternate lives would actually have looked like. The mind, however, is generous with possibilities. It builds them beautifully. In the imagination, the road not taken often becomes strangely perfect. Perhaps that is because imagination does not have to deal with ordinary reality. It does not show us the bad mornings, the disappointments, the arguments, the financial difficulties, the boredom. It gives us only the possibility. And possibility is difficult to compete with.
That is why some unfinished stories become larger in memory than they ever were in life. They remain untouched by reality.

Yet not everything unfinished needs to be completed. This is something I have slowly come to understand.
There are relationships that are better left as memories.
There are journeys whose ending would add nothing.
There are books we may never return to.
There are dreams that served their purpose simply by showing us a direction.
There are people we may never speak to again.
There are questions that may never receive answers.
And perhaps that is not always tragic. Life is not a manuscript in which every loose thread must eventually be resolved. It is closer to a notebook.
Some pages are filled carefully.
Some contain only a few lines.
Some are crossed out.
Some are left blank.
Some begin with great confidence and stop halfway down the page.
And then, unexpectedly, another story begins.
I think of the people who have passed through my life this way.
Some stayed for decades.
Some for years.
Some for a season.
Some for what now feels like only a few conversations.
At the time, I could not have known which category they belonged to. That is perhaps the beautiful uncertainty of human relationships. We never know whether a meeting is a beginning, a middle or an ending. We only understand later.
Someone can enter your life casually and leave a permanent mark.
Someone can be important for years and then become a name you rarely mention.
Someone can disappear and still remain part of the person you became.
The story ends. The influence doesn't. Perhaps that is another form of unfinishedness.
A person leaves, but something they gave us continues.
A sentence.
A habit.
A way of looking at the world.
A memory.
A question.
A courage we did not know we had borrowed from them.
Sometimes I wonder whether we are all carrying more unfinished stories than we realise. Maybe that is what makes a person interesting. Not the polished version we present to the world. Not the completed achievements listed on a résumé. But the things that remain unresolved beneath them.
The book we still intend to write.
The place we still want to see.
The person we still remember.
The apology we still owe.
The dream we still occasionally revisit.
The question that refuses to disappear.

These things do not necessarily make us incomplete. Perhaps they make us human. Because a completely finished life would be a strange thing. There would be nothing left to wonder about. Nothing left to imagine. No possibility of surprise. No unfinished sentence capable of becoming another beginning.

Maybe that is why I no longer look at unfinished things only with regret. Sometimes I look at them with tenderness. The unfinished book reminds me of the person I was when I began it. The abandoned plan reminds me that once, I wanted something badly enough to make a plan. The old friendship reminds me that there was a time when two lives naturally made room for each other. The unsent words remind me that there are things I still care about. Even the dreams I never pursued tell me something about the person I once hoped to become. Not everything unfinished needs an ending. Some things simply need to be remembered for what they were.
A possibility.
A relationship.
A hope.
A version of ourselves.
A road that disappeared behind us.

I don't know what unfinished stories I will carry into the rest of my life. There will probably be more. There are already things I have postponed without knowing that I was postponing them.
There are people I should call.
Words I should perhaps say.
Places I would like to return to.
Pages I still want to write.
Dreams I have not completely abandoned.
I have learned not to make promises to myself about when all of this will happen. "Someday" is a beautiful word, but it is also a dangerous one. Still, I don't want to turn every unfinished thing into an obligation.
Some can remain unfinished.
Some can remain mysterious.
Some can simply belong to the past.
Because perhaps the real question is not:
What should I have finished?
Perhaps it is:
What unfinished story am I still carrying?

And when I ask myself that, I do not immediately think of failure. I think of possibility. I think of the pages still open. The conversations that may yet happen. The places that may still be visited. The words that may still find their way into the world. And I think of all the stories whose endings I once believed I knew, only to discover that life had left another page unwritten.
Perhaps that is the wonder of it.
We are surrounded by unfinished things.
Some will remain unfinished forever.
Some will unexpectedly begin again.
And some, perhaps, are not waiting for an ending at all. They are simply waiting for us to notice that they are still part of us.



The Life You Could Have Lived

By: Ms. Pragya Tripathi
Editor, Panache Ink

"Do we grieve the lives we didn't live?"

There is a quiet, highly populated room located just behind the ordinary curtain of human consciousness. It is a space built entirely of thresholds not crossed, contracts unsigned, phone calls left unanswered, and trains watched from a platform as they rolled away toward unfamiliar geographies. In the daylight of our actual existence, we move with steady, calculated purpose. We sign long-term leases, honor professional commitments, nurse morning coffees, and fold laundry with the rhythmic certainty of people who believe they have chosen their path. Yet, running parallel to this visible trajectory is an invisible shadow-self - a phantom twin who took the risk, stayed behind in the foreign city, married the university sweetheart, or pursued the untamable artistic impulse instead of the safe vocation.

We encounter these unlived lives most frequently in the quiet hours between waking and sleeping, or when struck by the sudden, sharp dissonance of an old photograph discovered in a drawer. We look at the face looking back from five or ten years ago and realize how remarkably thin the membrane is between the reality we built and the dozens of alternate realities we abandoned. It is a profoundly human habit, this restless, melancholic urge to unpack the luggage of counterfactual existence. We weigh the quiet, predictable stability of our current days against the romantic, untamed electricity of the road untraveled, wondering quietly if human character is true destiny or merely a series of accidental lucky turns and forced compromises.

Consider real, tangible moments that replay across dining tables and office corridors. A young woman sits in a sleek corporate boardroom in Mumbai, reviewing quarterly analytics spreadsheets under the hum of fluorescent lighting. She is successful, respected, and entirely secure. Yet, every time a courier drops off a package, or she hears a classical violin practicing in a neighboring apartment building, her mind flashes back to a rainy afternoon seven years ago in Vadodara or Kolkata. That was the day she stood at a crossroads, holding an acceptance letter from a prestigious fine arts residency in one hand and a corporate placement offer in the other.

She chose safety, stability, and parental reassurance. But tonight, as she turns off her laptop in the empty office, she wonders about the paintings that were never framed, the canvases that remain blank in her imagination, and the bohemian studio apartment she chose not to rent.

Or consider a university professor grading essays at a wooden desk late at night. His life is defined by scholarly rigor, lecture halls, and structured academic milestones. Yet, when he scrolls through social media and spots an old college roommate who packed up a backpack two decades ago to run an organic farm in the Himalayan foothills, a strange pang hits his chest. He remembers the exact night they sat on a hostel balcony discussing that very escape. His actual life is filled with the deep, quiet dignity of teaching, but his shadow-self is out there weathering mountain storms, planting apple orchards, and living entirely outside the grid of institutional clocks.

These are not signs of clinical dissatisfaction; rather, they are the persistent symptoms of a human mind stretching against the narrow, singular confines of a lifetime. We are the only creatures on earth burdened with the capacity to remember futures that never happened

Literature and cinema have long been obsessed with this shadow architecture. From Robert Frost standing at the fork of two yellow woods to cinematic explorations of parallel paths, storytellers return again and again to the geometry of human choice. We read these narratives because they mirror our private wonderings. What if the promotion had been refused? What if the envelope had been opened? What if we had said no when societal pressure demanded a resounding yes?

Think of classic cinematic tropes where a character's life splits down the middle based on whether they catch a subway train or miss it by a fraction of a second. In one reality, they meet the love of their life and stumble into a whirlwind romance; in the other, they board an empty carriage and go home to an uneventful evening. The power of these alternate lives lies in their absolute pristine perfection. Because they were never tested by mundane friction, unpaid bills, physical exhaustion, or the slow erosion of routine, our unlived lives remain frozen in a state of eternal, unblemished potential. They are masterpieces of imagination precisely because they were never exposed to reality.

The human mind harbors a unique capacity for retrospective simulation. We run mental experiments where variables are shifted: a different university degree, a missed flight that averted a crisis, a harsh word left unsaid, or an affectionate gesture offered when pride intervened instead. These mental drafts do not make our real lives unlivable; rather, they serve as an invisible theater where our unexpressed longings find a temporary stage. We watch our alternative selves succeed brilliantly, fail catastrophically, or simply drift through quiet landscapes we never got to see.

Yet, there is a distinct melancholia attached to this theater. The alternate self never ages, never compromises with rent, never suffers the dull aches of ordinary fatigue. It exists in amber. When we grieve the lives we did not live, we are often mourning the loss of infinity. In youth, all doors are theoretically ajar, and the future is an expansive ocean of potential. As we grow older, every choice acts as a narrowing corridor. The walls move in, not to trap us, but to give us form and definition. To choose one thing is to sacrifice a thousand others, and that realization carries a subtle, lifelong ache.

Consider the literature of migration and displacement, where the phantom life is felt most acutely. An immigrant walking down a rainy street in London or Toronto carries the ghost of their childhood neighborhood in Delhi or Jaipur, their mother's kitchen, and the friendships that dissolved across time zones. Conversely, the person who stayed behind looks at digital dispatches and imagines a life of cosmopolitan reinvention abroad. Both are haunted by the same specter: the self that exists elsewhere. This mutual haunting suggests that dissatisfaction is not a failure of character, but a fundamental condition of being human. We are creatures cursed and blessed with the ability to conceive of realities that do not belong to us.

Why, then, do we persist in visiting these phantom rooms? Because imagination is the sanctuary where our unfulfilled possibilities are kept safe from compromise. In our daydreams, we remain heroes of unwritten epics, artists of unpainted masterpieces, and lovers of unblemished romances. To strip away this capacity would be to flatten the human spirit, reducing us to mere automata reacting only to immediate stimuli. Our ability to imagine alternate trajectories proves that we are more than what has happened to us; we are also the sum of what might have been.

To dwell permanently in the territory of "what is not," however, is to mistake a mirage for a functional map. The life we did choose holds a richness born entirely of its messiness, its friction, and its hard-won permanence. The unlived life has no anchor; it requires no sacrifice, endures no heartbreak, and therefore achieves no true depth. When we look back at the doors we closed, we must recognize that closing them was itself an act of creation. Every choice is an exclusion, but it is also a declaration of focus. We do not necessarily mourn the specific paths we failed to walk; rather, we stand in awe of the sheer, breathtaking vastness of human possibility. To imagine the lives we could have lived is not an exercise in futile regret, but a profound acknowledgment of how remarkable it is that out of a thousand potential directions, we landed right here. Both realities coexist quietly within us, the one we authored, and the infinite ones we merely dreamed.

'We are shaped not only by the paths we walked, but by the quiet ghosts of the roads we left behind, for every unlived life is simply the proof of how deeply we wanted to live.'



The People Who Exist Only in Our Memory

By: Mr. Rahul Chaurase
Editor, Panache Ink

There is a strange moment in life when someone stops being a person we can meet and becomes a person we can only remember. At first, the difference is difficult to grasp. We still know their face, their voice, the expressions they used, and what made them laugh. The mind continues to treat them as part of the present as though nothing has changed. We can still imagine calling them or telling them about something that happened during the day.

Then the reality becomes clearer. There will be no new conversation, no unexpected meeting, no ordinary afternoon in which they suddenly appear. We have reached the final version of the relationship has reached its final form; there will be no more moments to add to it.

This is one of the difficult things about losing someone. We lose not only their presence but also the future we might have shared with them.
We will never know what they would have said tomorrow, what they might have become, or how our relationship with them might have changed. A living person is unfinished. Memory begins when that unfinishedness is no longer available to us.

When someone is still part of our daily life, we rarely think about preserving them. Their presence is so ordinary that we barely notice it. We know their habits without studying them, hear their voice without thinking about its sound, and recognise their moods without needing an explanation. Their existence becomes part of the structure of our own life.

Then they are gone, and the ordinary becomes valuable.
We begin remembering things we never thought were worth remembering: the way they knocked on a door, the phrase they repeated, the food they preferred, the way they laughed at something that was not especially funny. We may forget important events but hold on to some completely insignificant detail because, somehow, that detail has become connected to the person.
Loss changes what we consider important.

This is where memory enters, but memory is not a perfect place where we store people exactly as they were. It selects, forgets, rearranges, and sometimes creates connections between things. A photograph can preserve a face but not the thoughts behind it. A recording can preserve a voice, but not the atmosphere in which it was heard. Even our strongest memories contain gaps.
What remains is usually not the whole person, but the person as we experience them.

This is why two people can remember the same individual differently. One may remember their kindness, another their temper. One may remember the jokes, another the arguments. A child may remember a parent as almost invincible, while, looking back as an adult, they may recognise the fear and uncertainty they could not see at the time.

None of these memories necessarily contains the whole truth.
Perhaps no memory ever could.

A person is too complex to fit within another person's understanding. Even while they are alive, we only know the part of them they reveal and the part we are capable of noticing. Their inner life remains partly inaccessible to us.
After they are gone, that limitation becomes permanent.

This is what makes memory both beautiful and unsettling. We preserve someone by losing parts of them. The complex person who contradicted themselves, changed their mind, surprised us, and continued to grow.

Time does something strange to these fragments. A sentence that meant nothing when we first heard it can become important years later. An argument that once made us angry may eventually become something we understand differently. We may remember someone's weaknesses more tenderly than we once judged them. The person has not changed.
Our understanding of the person has.

In this sense, remembering someone is almost like meeting them twice. The first meeting happens while they are alive, when they can still surprise us. The second happens in memory, when we begin to understand what their presence meant after it has already ended.
Sometimes this second meeting happens too late.

We realise things about people only after they are no longer here to hear us say them. We understand advice only after we need it. We recognise someone's sacrifices only after we become old enough to make sacrifices ourselves. There are questions we never asked and apologies we never gave because we assumed there would always be another opportunity.
There wasn't.

Yet people remain in our lives through more than what we consciously remember. Memory often becomes something more active than recalling a face or revisiting a story. It appears in the way we behave, the choices we make, and the things we repeat without realising where they came from.
Someone teaches us to make a particular dish, and years later we prepare it without thinking about where we learned it. Someone gives us a phrase that becomes part of our vocabulary. Someone's way of treating others becomes a model we unconsciously follow. We may even find ourselves giving advice in the same words they once used with us. At some point, we recognise their influence inside our own behaviour.

Memory and influence are therefore not entirely separate. What we remember can shape what we do, while what they changed in us can keep them present in ways that memory alone cannot. A conversation can change a belief. Kindness can become a habit. A lesson can affect a choice made years later. An experience shared by two people can continue to shape a life…
Human beings leave traces in one another. Most of the time, we never know how far those traces travel.

A person may have changed something in us without ever knowing it. We may do the same to someone else. Their words may become our words; their habits may become ours; their way of seeing the world may quietly become part of our own. Eventually, the original connection may become difficult to identify, but the effect remains.
This is one way a life extends beyond its immediate boundaries.
But we should be careful not to turn this into a comforting story in which memory somehow defeats death.

It does not.
Remembering someone does not bring them back. It cannot create another conversation, answer an old question, or give us the chance to change what happened. An old message remains an old message. The past does not reopen simply because we look at it again.
There is a temptation, especially when we miss someone, to treat memory as a substitute for presence.

It is not.
The person is gone.
The memory is ours.

Keeping that distinction does not make memory less meaningful. It makes it more honest.
We can look at an old photograph without expecting the person to return. We can hear an old song without believing that the past has reopened. We can tell a story about someone without pretending that the story contains everything they were.
The past can remain important without becoming present again.
Perhaps acceptance begins there.

Not when we stop remembering, but when we stop asking memory to reverse time.
This matters because there is a difference between carrying someone and living inside their absence. If we spend our entire lives trying to recreate what has disappeared, we stop experiencing what is still here. New people arrive. New relationships develop. New versions of ourselves appear.

Remembering does not require refusing the present.
Perhaps the best way to honour those who shaped us is to let their influence become part of a continuing life, rather than turning our lives into monuments to what is gone.
We tell their stories. We cook what they taught us to cook. We repeat their jokes. Memory does not live only in the mind.

Some people leave behind photographs, documents, and names in public records; others remain only in the memories of those who knew them. And when those memories disappear, a life can seem to vanish from the story a community tells about itself.

So remembering also asks us to notice what is missing. Whose letters were saved? Whose names were recorded? Whose stories were considered important enough to pass on? Preservation is not only about keeping what remains; it is also about seeking out the lives that were overlooked, misrepresented, or left undocumented.

Someone who never met them may come to know a small part of them because we chose to tell their story. In this way, memory becomes a form of inheritance.
But inheritance does not mean receiving something unchanged.
Every generation transforms what it receives.
Someone gives us something; we reshape it through our own experience, and eventually part of it may pass to someone else.

A story changes as it is retold.
So does a person inside memory.
Perhaps this is not a failure of preservation. Perhaps it is simply what happens when the past has to travel through living minds.
Eventually, even our memories begin to fade.
We forget the exact sound of someone's voice. Their face becomes less precise. Details disappear. We remember the story but lose the circumstances around it. Sometimes all that remains is the feeling that someone was once deeply important to us.
At first, this can feel like losing them again.

But perhaps forgetting some details is not a betrayal. It is simply the limit of being human. We cannot preserve every face, every conversation, every afternoon. Our minds have to make space for the present, and life continues whether we are ready for it or not.
What matters may not be whether we remember everything.
It may be what knowing them changed in us.
That question turns memory away from the past and toward the present
Instead of asking how we can keep someone exactly as they were, we can ask what their existence left behind in ours.
Maybe it is a habit.
Maybe a belief.
Maybe a wound.
Maybe a way of loving.
Maybe a story we still tell.
Sometimes the answer is not obvious. We may carry an influence for years before recognising where it came from.

This is why some people remain important even when our memories of them become incomplete. Their physical presence is gone, their details may fade, and our understanding of them may continue to change, but the fact that we once knew them has already become part of our history.

They helped shape a version of us that would not exist in quite the same way without them.
And that is perhaps the most honest form of preservation.
It means not keeping a person frozen in memory, but accepting that they have become part of something larger: the life we continue to live.

We cannot keep everyone.
We cannot remember everything.
We cannot know what the people we have lost would think of the person we have become.
But we can recognise that their lives crossed ours, and that the crossing had consequences.
Someone was here.
We knew them.

For a certain amount of time, their existence became connected to ours.
Then time moved on.
Perhaps this is all we can ask of memory. Not that it makes the past permanent, but that it allows us to carry its meaning without pretending that the past is still alive.
The people who exist only in our memory are not preserved exactly as they were. They survive as fragments, stories, habits, lessons and traces of influence. Some details disappear while others become strangely permanent.

Eventually, even those traces may fade.
But that does not erase the fact that they once mattered.
Maybe human beings were never meant to be preserved completely. We are temporary, and so are the relationships through which we understand ourselves. What remains is not a perfect record but a series of effects moving quietly from one life into another.

A person leaves.
Something remains.



The Door We Didn't Open:

The Quiet Weight of What Could Have Been

- Mr. Kartik Srivastava
Editor, Panache Ink

There is a peculiar kind of silence that belongs to the things we never did. It lives in the message we typed but never sent, the application we filled out but never submitted, and the confession we rehearsed but never made. Unlike the memories of our failures, these moments have no definite ending. They remain suspended between possibility and reality, asking a question we may never be able to answer: What if we had tried? It's not that we could not have been able to either; it's that we would have succeeded; it's a question that remains unanswered.
We celebrate the doors we open- the jobs we secure, the cities we move to, and the relationships we pursue. Yet, we rarely speak about the doors we stood before, hesitated at, and eventually left behind. Perhaps it is because these choices leave no photographs or satisfying conclusions. They leave only the quiet weight of what could have been.

Sometimes, familiarity is the greatest obstacle to change. We cling to what we know because uncertainty demands courage. Imagine a young woman who dreams of pursuing postgraduate studies in another city. She receives an admission offer but hesitates at the thought of leaving her family and familiar surroundings. She promises herself she will apply next year, when life is more settled. But next year brings new responsibilities, and eventually, her dream becomes a story about a life she might have lived.

Her decision may not have been wrong. Family responsibilities are real, and leaving home is not always possible. Yet, her experience reveals how easily caution can become a habit. We sometimes mistake the absence of discomfort for contentment, convincing ourselves that we are being practical when we are actually afraid of the unknown. The familiar can be a home, but it can also become a hiding place. The challenge lies in recognising the difference.

We often wait for the perfect moment, forgetting that some opportunities have an expiry date. Consider someone who dreams of becoming a writer. They buy notebooks, collect books on storytelling, and promise themselves they will begin when they have enough time and confidence. Meanwhile, another person begins writing imperfectly, faces rejection, learns, and tries again. One keeps preparing for the beginning; the other discovers what beginning actually requires.

Preparation is valuable, but it can become a respectable disguise for fear. We wait until we feel qualified enough, confident enough, or ready enough, hoping uncertainty will eventually disappear. But the scholarship deadline passes, the vacancy closes, and the conversation we intended to have becomes impossible. Not every opportunity must be seized impulsively, but we must learn to distinguish thoughtful patience from endless postponement. Sometimes, readiness is not a feeling that arrives before we act; it is something we discover along the way.

Perhaps the most haunting doors are those behind which we imagine perfect lives. Unexplored possibilities often become more beautiful in our imagination than reality could ever guarantee. Imagine two people considering the same job. One applies, gets selected, and discovers demanding hours and difficult colleagues. The other never applies but spends years wondering whether the position could have transformed their life. In their imagination, the job offers professional recognition, financial independence, and fulfillment. The person who took the opportunity encounters its complications; the person who did not preserves its imagined perfection.

The same happens in relationships. We wonder whether confessing our feelings might have led to a beautiful love story or whether a single conversation could have saved a friendship. We rarely imagine the disagreements and disappointments that might have followed. Psychological research associated with the Zeigarnik effect suggests that incomplete tasks can remain particularly accessible in our minds. Similarly, unfinished possibilities invite us to revisit them, searching for endings that reality never provided.

Perhaps, some of our ghosts are not the lives we lost, but the beautiful stories we wrote about lives we never lived.

Yet, not every closed door represents a missed opportunity. Sometimes, it represents self-respect. Imagine being offered a prestigious position with an impressive salary, only to discover that the workplace normalises humiliation and constant exhaustion. Declining the offer might disappoint others, but it could preserve your peace. Similarly, someone who chooses not to return to a relationship marked by repeated disrespect may be making one of the bravest decisions of their life.

Society often celebrates persistence without asking what we are persisting in. We admire those who fight for careers, relationships, and ambitions, sometimes forgetting that determination without discernment can become self-destructive. Of course, fear can disguise itself as intuition, just as avoidance can masquerade as self-care. We must honestly ask ourselves whether we are protecting something important or merely protecting ourselves from the discomfort of growth. Walking away is not always defeat; sometimes, it is wisdom.

Every choice also carries an invisible cost. Choosing one life inevitably means leaving other possibilities unexplored. Someone who remains in their hometown to care for an aging parent may occasionally wonder what life abroad would have offered. A parent devoted to raising children may think about the career they might have pursued. A teacher who chooses stability over a corporate career may sometimes imagine a different financial future.

These feelings can co-exist with genuine happiness. We can love the lives we have built while wondering about the lives we did not experience. Gratitude does not automatically erase longing, just as longing does not diminish gratitude. A meaningful life does not have to be an exhaustive one. We cannot experience every possibility, and we should not interpret every sacrifice as evidence that we made the wrong choice.

Perhaps, maturity is not the ability to eliminate every doubt about our decisions, but the ability to live with those doubts without allowing them to diminish what we have gained.

Making peace with the past does not mean pretending every decision was right. Some choices were shaped by fear, financial limitations, family obligations, or circumstances beyond our control. We can acknowledge our hesitation without turning our former selves into permanent defendants. If we regret not taking a creative risk, we can begin creating today. If we regret remaining silent, we can become more honest in our relationships. The original door may have closed, but another entrance may still exist.

The next time you stand before an unfamiliar door, ask yourself whether you are responding to a genuine warning or simply the discomfort of change. Consider what opening it might cost, but also what remaining outside might mean. Give yourself permission to be afraid, but do not automatically allow fear to decide for you.

Life is not made meaningful by opening every door. It is made meaningful by understanding why we open some, why we leave others closed, and how we learn to live with the difference.
Some doors were never ours to open. Some closed because circumstances left us no choice. Others remained behind us because we were afraid.
We may never know what waited on the other side. Perhaps, peace begins when we accept that we do not need to know everything.
There is still a life unfolding on this side of the threshold. And somewhere ahead, another door is waiting- not for the person we wish we had been, but for the person we are still becoming.

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My Journal



Ms. Priyanka
Author
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Between the morning bell and morning tea,
I shift between the roles I carry in me.
A handbag heavy with the weight of the day,
A small hand waving as I turn away.
The clock moves fast; the hours relentlessly run,
Work waiting to be finished, duties to be done.
In meetings, marks, and pages left to write,
I hold the fire of my own quiet light.
Yet through the noise, a soft voice calls my name,
Rewriting every goal, redefining every aim.
For all the worlds I build, the dreams I chase,
My heart rests safest in a small embrace.
I walk two paths, not always sure or bold,
Dividing my time, yet rich in what I hold.
Not two halves split, but whole in every part—
A working life, wrapped in a mother's heart.

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The Bulbul's Grit



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

On a stormy autumn day,
The trees trembled with fierce unrest,
Leaves were scattered as if left in the lurch
While my mind waged a silent war—
Is this wind a blessing in disguise?
Wrapping me in cozy warmth indoors,
Or an unseen thief stealing my mindful walks
Through the whispering green?
Suddenly, a shrill cry at my balcony!!
A tiny red-whiskered bulbul, frantic and flustered,
Thrashing its delicate head against the railings,
Caught in the chaos of the storm's fury.
Appeared another bulbul, following close,
Crying softly, with eyes that pleaded and beseeched.

In those fleeting moments, my heart wished aloud,
If only I could read their silent voice,
And unveil the stories their trembling wings held.
Enraptured by the chaos, poised on the edge of their panic:
Trying to decipher the aerial discord,
Tracking the unseen threat,
Stealthily and gently I followed them.

A tiny red bulbul perched on the stairway down,
Struggling to stand on delicate feet
Wings fluttering as light as feathers,
It looked at me guiltlessly, daring to fly back to its nest.

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I watched with bated breath,
Feeling the tension of the birdie's sharp alarms,
And in that moment, I sensed
The helplessness of its parents—and my own heart

Though helpless, I stayed close.
Its parents circled, calling through the rain,
Then drew near with courage and care.
One nudged their trembling young toward the stair,
While the other kept watch from above.

Through gusting winds and wild cries,
They guided their young toward safety,
Then led it back toward the nest—
To the warmth waiting there.

Together they braved the storm,
Their little one safe between them.
With tireless wings and steadfast hearts,
They flew home through the rain,
Their love stronger than the tempest.

By Usha Krishnan

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Quell



Dr. Fred Gerhard
Poet
Ashburnham
USA

When night's aeolian cry turns to you
To bear parchment and quill to inky shades,
Singing semblance of words left off anew,
Howling it stirs shutters and bramble blades.

Stars awake and stare from fathomless dark
To see that fearsome well undream in your
hovering fingers, and quill. Where to start?
Behind what rattles your chamber and door —

Another night. Another growl replies
whereupon constellations rearrange.
And by such starlight you are recognized.
There's no storm, no wind so hollow or strange

That cannot be quelled from shade penned freely,
For through pleased, pursed lips breathes your poetry.

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NEVER TOO LATE



Mr. Jose L Lopez
Poet and writer
Puerto Rico

I woke up with the sunrise,
left my doubts beside the door.
Every step I take today
is a step I never took before.

No more waiting for tomorrow,
no more wishing on a star.
I can feel the road beneath me,
I can finally go this far.

Never too late,
never too late!
Turn the music up,
I'm changing my fate!
Never too late,
I'm ready to fly.
If the world keeps moving,
so will I!

Hands up,
feel the beat.
New day,
new heartbeat.

Never too late!
Never too late!

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END NOTE

Until Our Words Meet Again

Panache Ink International Magazine | October 2026

As we conclude this edition of Panache Ink, we celebrate the stories, emotions, and creative voices that have brought these pages to life. This edition reminds us that literature helps us see differently, feel deeply, and understand one another better.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our writers, editors, readers, and contributors for being part of our literary journey. Your support inspires us to create a platform where every voice matters, and creativity flourishes.

Everyone has feelings, but not everyone knows how to express them in words. Join Panache Ink and discover the writer within you.

As we turn the final page, let us continue to read with curiosity, write with courage, and share our stories with honesty. Every great writer begins with a single word—and your story deserves to be heard.

Until our words meet again, keep writing, keep inspiring, and keep discovering the extraordinary within the ordinary.

With gratitude and warm literary wishes,

Dr. Akanksha Shrivastava
Founder, Publisher & Chief Editor
Panache Ink International Magazine
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