

অঞ্জলি



ANJALI

SARASWATI PUJA 2009

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Cover design

Tumpa Bhattacharya

Welcome message from Pujari President

পূজারীর তরফ থেকে বছরের প্রথম অনুষ্ঠানে আপনাদের সকলকে জানাই সাদর অভ্যর্থনা। ঋতু পরিক্রমার নিয়ম মতো ২০০৮ সাল পেরিয়ে ২০০৯-এ পদার্পণ করলাম আমরা। ২০০৮-এর পদযাত্রা খুব মসৃণ ছিলনা। অর্থনৈতিক ভাঙন, বাজার, চাকুরি ও অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রে সংলগ্ন অস্থিরতা, জনজীবনে অনিশ্চয়তা - এইসব ডামাডোলের দুলুনিতে পার হয়ে গেল ২০০৮।

পূজারী কিন্তু থেমে থাকেনি। সরস্বতীপূজা, বৈশাখী, পিকনিক, দুর্গাপূজা এবং নববর্ষ - সমস্ত কর্মকান্ড অত্যন্ত সুষ্ঠু ভাবে পালিত হয়েছে। এইধরনের সম্মিলিত আয়োজন ঐক্যবদ্ধতা, সদিচ্ছা ও একাগ্রতা ছাড়া অসম্ভব। পূজারীর ইতিহাস অসম্ভবকে সম্ভব করে তোলার ইতিহাস।

আজ পূজারীর আরেকটি বছর শুরু হল সরস্বতীপূজার শুভসূচনার মাধ্যমে। বাগ্‌দেবী সরস্বতী বিদ্যা, জ্ঞান, ও প্রজ্ঞার দেবী। বীণা এবং পুস্তক হাতে তাঁর অবতরন। বিদ্যার্থী এবং বিশেষতঃ ছোটোদের কথা মনে রেখে সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানের প্রয়োজনা যেখানে তিন চার বছরের শিশুরাও অন্তর্ভুক্ত। দেশে সরস্বতীপূজা স্কুল কলেজ বা নিজেদের বাড়ীর মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ। অতএব এই দেশে পূজার সঙ্গে সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান দেবীর প্রতি ছোটোদের নিবেদন বলা যেতে পারে। সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান ছাড়াও শিশু ও কিশোরদের জন্য বরাবরের মত কিছু প্রতিযোগিতামূলক অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন রাখা হয়েছে, পূজারীর তরফ থেকে সেই সমস্ত আয়োজক ও অভিভাবক দের জানাই অভিনন্দন যারা নিজেদের দৈনন্দিন ব্যস্ততার মধ্যেও এইধরনের অনুষ্ঠান সুসম্পন্ন করতে পেরেছেন। তবে এখানেই তো শেষ নয়; সামনে ২০০৯ কে পূজারীর সাফল্যের ঐতিহ্য অনুযায়ী বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ডের মাধ্যমে অলংকৃত করার বিশাল দায়িত্ব। ভোরের সূর্যের মত গোটা দিনও আলোকিত থাকুক, এই আশায় সকলের সক্রিয় সহযোগিতা কামনা করে

নটিকেতা নন্দী



সরস্বতী পূজা : ৩১শে জানুয়ারি, ২০০৯

অনুষ্ঠান সূচী

১২:০০	বসে আঁকো	Children art competition by Aradhana Bhattacharya and Reema Saha
১২:০০	মেহেন্দি	Mehendi art on paper by Tumpa Bhattacharya and Malabika Deb
১২:০০	চিত্র গ্রহেলিকা	Riddle on photography by Sonia Nandi and Samaresh Mukhopadhyaya
১২:৪৫	ট্রেজার হান্ট	Treasure hunt for children by Sonia Nandi and Avijit Hazra
০৩:১৫	বিচিত্রা	Childrens' Variety Cultural Talent Show anchored by Tinny Datta; Coordinators: Sutapa Das and Soma Datta
০৪:০০	ফ্যামিলি ফিউড	Family Feud Combo Competition by Rupa and Sudipto Banerjee; Coordinator: Dola Roy
০৪:৪০	সরস্বতী বন্দনা	Saraswati Bandana by Debasri Datta and Rahul Ray
০৪:৫০	একক সঙ্গীত	Varieties of Song by Rumki Maiti
০৫:০০	মনমাতানো গানে সলিল চৌধুরী	Group dance based on Salil Choudhury by Mayuri Ray
০৫:৪৫	শ্রদ্ধাভক্তি	Remembering Tapan Sinha through his work by Richa Samanta and Biswanath Bhattacharya
০৬:০০	কবিতা ব্যাঙ	Group recitation by Richa Samanta/ Subhasree Nandy /Sanjib Datta/ Santanu Kar
০৬:১৫	লোক সঙ্গীত	Bengali folk songs by Surojit Basu



Goddess Saraswati
by Shreyasi Ghosal (9th Grade)



Rakhalraja Krishna
by Samhita Ghosal (6th Grade)

The Rarest of Them All...

By: Suporna Chaudhuri

Age: 12

Some people are like windows,
Through them, you can see the world
From an entirely different perspective...
Such people are common.

Some people are like doors;
They appear at auspicious times
And lead into worlds of opportunity...
Such people are common.

Some people are like walls;
They stand up to the hardest of storms,
And protect you from the outside danger...
Such people are common.

Some people are like floors,
They provide you with a base to stand on,
And always keep you standing tall...
Such people are common.

Some people are like air-conditioners;
You can let them know what you want,
And they always know how to cool you down...
Such people are common.

Some people are like curtains;
They can shield you from external misery,
Yet they can withdraw to let you the sunlight...
Such people are common.

Some people are like mirrors;
They tell you the truth, the whole truth, and the
absolute truth,
And they allow you to examine yourself within them...
Such people are common.

Some people are like candles;
When lit, they burn to their fullest extent,
Always telling you there is hope...
Such people are common.

But some people are like whole rooms;
Once you with them, you feel cozy,
And you know you have found shelter.
They have windows, doors, walls, floors,
Air-conditioners, curtains, mirrors,
And never-dying candles.
Within that room, you know you will be loved forever...
Such people are the rarest of them all.

The Moon Remains the Same

Nairita Nandy

Age: 15

A million years give or take

She'll disappear around daybreak

Men will come and men will go

But she will never lose her glow

Every night she reappears

She'll sometimes hide from her fears

For war and hate are her kryptonites

But in her beauty there is a light

A ray of hope for us to see

How beautiful our short life can be

Age has claimed her through wrinkles and pores

Still life burns in her core

Every night in a different form

She'll brave it through the toughest storm

The world we know can change any moment

Life throws itself at us leaving no room to vent

In our ever changing quest for love and fame

There is solace in knowing the moon remains the
same.



Landscape by Richik Ray(8 yrs)

Jerky Driving

Aradhana Bhattacharya

There were very few things that seemed 'impossible' to Leela!!! She could cook, she could sing. Recently picked up tennis, even learnt to swim at the age of 24 and took a crash course in Karate last month.

But could she learn to drive???

How come something so simple; something that even her maid's (10th fail) teenage son could do back home in India, be so difficult here - she thought???

After getting married to Ravi, she had moved to the US with the confidence of doing something new...something different....However very soon she found out that pretty much her entire life depended on whether she could drive or not!!!

Strange!!! She thought!!! This had never been such a challenge back home...

Left without a choice, she decided to jump this hurdle as well. Like most newly imported wives (from India), she too was seen driving around the parking lots each evening with Ravi, to start with. From the parking lot she graduated to the road. Gosh!!!...that was a lot to handle at first...Cars, vans and trucks of every size flying by...few honking sometimes at her snail's pace... Her forehead often crusted with pearls of sweat and she wondered whether it is her BP or the Atlanta heat?? Not to mention the nonstop *human radio* next to her that never fell short of pointing out her slightest mistakes...

This was 'Not' working...This way she could be 60 before she would learn to drive...

Taking formal driving lessons seemed to be the solution to this trick question.

By that time Leela had landed a job in an office next door. She had even convinced her manager to excuse her for an hour from work twice each week.

That day it had been raining heavily since morning. Leela had a few discussions with her manager (who was taking genuine interest in her driving lessons, hoping to delegate her own task of depositing office checks in the bank at the end of the day to Leela...*There was no free lunch in this world!!!! So true!!!*) whether to postpone her first lesson to some other day or not...Finally when she called the driving school; a harsh voice at the other end notified her that they did not entertain same day cancellations!!!

It was half an hr past 3:00PM and the instructor was nowhere to be seen!!! Finally she received a call from him "I am in the parking lot"!!!

Not sure whether to be thrilled or dreary, Leela made her way down with heavy steps and an umbrella in hand.

The instructor's vehicle was easy to spot. Contrary to what she had expected, there sat Paul - a broad, middle aged eerie looking guy, with tattoos all over who spoke southern style English!!! "So you haive taiken(taken) some lessons befoir (before)" he remarked as soon as Leela took to the wheels. Quite startled by his statement, for once Leela thought "is he physic or what???" Surely he looked like one... "How do you know" she asked. A quick chill ran thru her spine! "It looks like you do know the 10 o'clock/2 o'clock rule (rule)" he explained. Ok that was not that bad.

"Baick up (Back) and we will go out on the roads". Leela did tap on the breaks a few times in place of the accelerator right in the middle of rush hour traffic, and vice versa. Thank god Paul had a second set of control, otherwise that would be another story to tell...

After driving around the neighborhood a few times, Leela was asked to take a route quite unfamiliar to her on a slightly deserted road. "Where is this guy taking me?" she wondered. By then the rain had intensified quite a bit and the windshield looked nothing but a blurry haze. Leela tried hard not to skid off the road, if only she could see something!!! She found herself driving into a large park like enclosure! What was that sign??? She asked herself. 'Chattahoochee Picnic area????' Surely this was no time for picnics!!!!

Getting a bit nervous, she muttered "I guess I have to get back to work now".

"Your one hour is NOT ovier (over)" came a stern reply. Leela's eyes widened with alarm. She slant a quick glance at her watch. It was 4:35 PM. "Oh!" She was engulfed with a strange uncanny feeling

Leela was unnerved by the resemblance of her situation to one of the scenes from the popular Ramsey brothers' movies!!! Heavy rains, girl driving with a stranger into an unknown territory (which usually was a haunted house in those movies). She felt butterflies in her stomach.

Paul made her drive to the very heart of the picnic area right next to the river. What next??? Her adrenalin was pumping. By then she was seriously considering jumping out of the car and running for her life. But in which direction, she wondered?

Paul: "OK park here, I need to use the reistroom (restroom)"???!!@@@

What????Is this guy out of his mind????

Still not sure of his intentions, Leela quickly locked the car from inside (as soon as Paul got off) and frantically looked for her cell phone. "Oh no!!!! It must be sitting on her desk back at work!! "How can I be so careless" she cursed herself dragging up the umbrella from the back seat, just in case she had to use it for self defense! Leela tried to look outside thru her window to see if she could see anyone else there. Should she scream for help?

Just then she found Paul jogging back towards the car. (No, with no other gang members!!!) She could put the umbrella back. What a relief...Her BP was coming back to normal now. The rain too had subsided. They made their way back to her office parking lot. Leela thanked her lucky stars, almost jumped out of the car and dashed for the elevator.

"Tomorrow at 3:00 PM: Paul yelled from behind...

At least one thing was clear – Paul may be a very weird guy but certainly not the villain she thought him to be.

Surprisingly, Paul seemed less and less ominous to Leela during her future lessons. Strangely they even talked some times. Paul had mentioned that he lived near downtown alone with 3 dogs and 4 parrots!! No wonder!!! He also told her once that he envisioned her driving a Yellow Volkswagen Beetle!!! Wow that would be something!!!

However there was a strange coincidence – It always rained when they were out driving. "Probably I should pass on my driving schedule to the weather channel" she thought. "It will certainly help them make better predictions!!!"

"We will be going out on the freeway today" Paul announced in their third session. Leela had got used to surprises by then. It was raining as usual. Her wiper wagging side to side at the highest possible speed. Leela couldn't believe that she actually COULD merge from the ramp into the freeway and was driving at a speed of 75 mph - still alive. She had even changed a lane after that monstrous Walmart truck overtook her, without thrashing into any other vehicle!! Quite surreal....

"Is it really me or Paul controlling at the other end all the time?" There was still an element of doubt in her mind. She had often thought of Ravi as nothing short of a superhero to be capable of pulling such stunts on the freeway!!!

Following week: "drive upto the coine(cone) till you see other coine in the side mirror... then turn your wheel all the way roun(round), reverse up, STOP, straighten your wheel and pull up..."etc
After another lesson on parallel/reverse parking (that seemed more like high-school geometry), "you are ready for the test," Paul announced.

"Practice a few more times with your husband before you go...Best of luck..." Leela was not so sure!!! But said nothing. She had had enough. She shook hands and said good bye.

So you think Leela went to take the test the following week and had that magical little piece of plastic in her hand???
Not so fast my friend..... "Picture abhi baki hai"
That is another longggggggggggg story...
Let's save it for next time.

The Adventure of a Lifetime

Shubhom Bhattacharya

Age: 11

The searing heat of the Sun pounded along with the waves of the ocean onto the shore. In a small granite cave on the shores of New Zealand were five big, burly men with lances and sabers. They were (obviously) pirates, and they looked like a strong band too.

Sarazac was the first to wake up. Even though he was only about 17 years of age, he had already earned the reputation of Blackbeard only by being responsible and cunning. Sihlkha was next. He was the pirate scholar; very disciplined and organized. He had a vast knowledge of just about anything. The other pirates were like the pirates you see on TV; big, with large beards and yellow teeth and plenty of scars and bruises and a missing limb somewhere. Their names were Richard, Skonowzki, and Hamit. On with the story: so somewhere between dawn and 8:00 A.M., a gigantic vessel came their way. The pirates weren't scared: it was their own ship.

Sarazac, always being on time, stood up immediately, and so did Sihlkha. When the vessel reached shore, Sihlkha and Sarazac climbed on board. They greeted Captain Cook, but unfortunately for the others, Cook sent them to the galleys, where they would not be hung, but had to wipe blood and other not-too-peaceful things.

"Laddies, I found a new treasure map, the treasure is located inside an ancient Aztec temple in Mexico, not too far from here! So that is where the adventure began.

The sail was long and monotonous. There was nothing to do but sit there and talk. It took about two weeks of fair winds to bring them to Mexico. It took two more days to march to what is now Mexico City, where the map said the temple was. It happened to be an old and deserted place, so they marched in without any trouble. Too bad, they didn't know what was in store for them.

The journey to the end of the temple seemed to take like forever.

To add to the disappointment, there was no door or cave which the treasure could be in. Sihlkha was the one who figured out where to go. He had read that Aztecs had trapdoors and levers in a book.

All you had to do was somehow split open the bricks. So he took a strong sword from Cook, and wriggled it until the bricks started falling out, until a passageway large enough for a man to walk through was visible. So they marched on and on again, until they came to a huge statue about fifty feet tall. It was Cook who saved them this time. While the other pirates searched for ways out, Cook noticed a hollow hole large enough for a man to crawl through in the pupil of the statue's eye. So they climbed up the mossy statue and crawled through the "pupil." They reached a large, circular opening with nothing in it. Sihlkha noticed a pavestone with writing on it. He knew the language of the Aztecs and interpreted it in moments. It said:

The treasure of the Aztecs is in the next room. Still, you have one last challenge awaiting you. Solve the riddle and the path will open.

The riddle is: Plants help us in many ways. Look under a plant and they will help once again.

Nobody understood. They thought many hours and nobody could think of anything. Then, Sarazac showed a strike of genius. He went up to the only weed in the room. He took some gunpowder, spread it on the plant, and lit a match on it, and ran away just in time. When the smoke and stone debris cleared, a large tunnel was visible to the pirates. Cook led the way through the tunnel and ... the mission was an absolute success. The pirates got very rich, Sihlkha got some new scrolls, Captain Cook got new compasses and maps, Sarazac who got the most credit, got new toys and heaps of gold. Their hard labor had not been wasted ... all the pirates were truly happy.



Urjoshi Kar (5 years)



Aratrika Kar (5 years)

The Kind King

Tania Bhattacharyya (Age: 11 years)

Long ago, there was a great king whose name was John. He was very elegant, he didn't wear any heavy clothe or jewels like other kings. One day there was a sudden earthquake.

Some poor people were already suffering from famine. They came to the king to state their problems. They implored the king. John was sad after hearing their misery and immediately called his ministers and decreed them to bring food, clothes and ordered them to make many more houses for them.

One of the poors said that you gave things plentifully to us, we thank you for your kindness. John said ... I am glad to help you, but make sure, if you have any more problems, come to me any time and talk to me about them. They went to their new homes. It was raining and water was dripping from the roof. They again went to the king and said ... the raindrops always trickle from the roof, what do we do? The king said leave it to me. Overnight all the roofs were repaired. All subjects were living a great life since.

ঠাকুর স্কুল

সৌম্য ভট্টাচার্য

হেডমাস্টার টলম্যান
তার নীচে কৈলাস সেন
কৈলাস সেনের দাড়ি চাঁছা
তার নীচে অনঙ্গ চাচা
অনঙ্গ চাচার ভাল হাত
তার নীচে প্রিয়নাথ

প্রিয়নাথের হাত শক্ত
তার নীচে দীনতারন দত্ত
দীনতারন দত্ত ন্যালা ভোলা
তার নীচে টিকিওয়ালা
টিকিওয়ালা বংশীবদন
তার নীচে রামনেধন।

Back to যোগাসন

সমরেশ মুখোপাধ্যায়



বেশ কয়েকবছর হল, কলেস্টেরল কম রাখবার জন্যে জিমে যাতায়াত করছিলাম। গত দুর্গাপূজোর অঞ্জলীতে রাজীবের দৌড় নিয়ে লেখা পড়ে আর তার সাথে অর্থনীতির মন্দায়নে চিন্তিত হয়ে ভাবছিলাম অন্য কোন অযান্ত্রিক পরিবর্তন আছে কিনা। তাছাড়া, হাঁটুর একটা নিয়মিত ব্যাথা জানান দিচ্ছিল যে বয়স এখন কমতি (সুকুমার রায়ের হযবরল মনে পড়ে?) এবং জিমের স্ট্রেচিং যন্ত্রে সামাল হচ্ছিল না। এক ক্রীড়া বিশেষজ্ঞ ডাক্তারবাবু ছুরিতে শান দিয়ে তৈরীই ছিলেন কাটাছেঁড়া করবেন বলে। আর জিমের একঘণ্টা সময় আমার ছোট মেয়ের সময় থেকে নিয়ে নিতে বড়ই মনঃপীড়া হচ্ছিল।

সবকিছু থামিয়ে হঠাৎ একদিন ঠিক করলাম যোগাসন করলে কেমন হয়? অনেকদিন আগে ‘বার্নস্ অ্যান্ড নোবলস্’ থেকে একটা বই¹ কিনেছিলাম। সেই বই থেকে নিয়মিত কিছু আসন করতে করতে সত্যি অসাধ্যসাধন হল। অভাবনীয় ভাবে, মাসদুয়েকের মধ্যে ব্যাথা উধাও। ভালোকরে ভেবে দেখলাম, আমাদের প্রাচীন সভ্যতা আমাদের কত অমূল্য সম্পদের উত্তরাধিকারী করেছে। আমরা কতটুকু তা আহরন করেছি। তাই মনে হল এই অভিজ্ঞতা সকলের সাথে ভাগ করে নেওয়া দরকার। এ পথে, বাড়িতে বসে নিখরচায় যে মন ও শরীরের অনবদ্য নবীকরন সম্ভব এটা একবার স্বাদ পেলেই, রোজ আপনার মন টানবে যোগাসনের দিকে। আবার প্রতি আসনের একটা দার্শনিক দিক আছে। যেমন বৃক্ষাসন করার সময় মনে করবেন আপনি এক মহিরুহা। শত ঝড় বাতাস আপনাকে স্থানচ্যুত করতে পারবে না। যদি এই দার্শনিক দিকটা পালন করতে পারেন তবে মনের স্থিতিবস্থার ব্যাপারে আপনি অনকটা এগিয়ে থাকবেন।

তবে মনে রাখবেন ভুলভাবে করলে ক্ষতি হতে পারে। আমি আমার বড় মেয়েকে জিজ্ঞাসা করে প্রায়শই ঠিক করি হাত পা সোজা হচ্ছে কিনা। বাড়তি পাওনা- আমার মেয়েরাও এখন আমার সাথে আসন করে। প্রত্যেক আসনের সাথে নিঃশ্বাস ছাড়া আর নেয়ার ব্যাপার আছে। সেটাও খুবই জরুরী। আর প্রত্যেক আসনের কিছু আদর্শ সময় আছে। আমি যে বই থেকে করি, তাতে সকাল এবং সন্ধ্যার কিছু শ্রেণীবদ্ধ আসন দেওয়া আছে। আসনগুলি খুবই শক্তিসম্ভালনা করে এবং রোগমুক্ত থাকতে সাহায্য করে। আপনারা যারা আমার মত সারাদিন কি-বোর্ড চালনা করেন, গড়ুরাসন করলে কর্পাল টানেলর প্রোকোপে পড়বেন না। তবে এসবের সাথে, নিদেনপক্ষে সপ্তাহে তিনদিন ন্যূনতম ৩০ মিনিট করে, দৌড় বা সাইকেল করলে সোনায়ে সোহাগা। আপনার সুদীর্ঘ রোগমুক্ত জীবনের শুভকামনাসহ শেষ এখানেই শেষ করলাম। একটু ভেবে দেখবেন।

¹ Total Yoga: A Step-By-Step Guide to Yoga at Home for Everybody by Tara Fraser. About \$13 used in Amazon.

Hindu Worship

Samar Mitra

Hinduism is a religion that offers multiple choices among its followers. A person does not have to believe in a personal god to be a Hindu. One can be a Hindu and believe just in one god with or without form. Again, a Hindu can believe in many gods and goddesses. Most of the Hindus belong to the last category and it is this group of people that worships different idols at different times of the year. Each god and goddess is believed to have special qualities and the worshipper prays to be bestowed with those qualities. Thus we worship Ganesha for success, Lakshmi for riches and Saraswati for knowledge.

The sages in the early days imagined different forms for the multitudes of gods and goddesses. In Hindu scriptures knowledge is compared with light that removes darkness or ignorance. At the same time, knowledge does not have a trace of impurity in it. The social symbol of purity being white, the color of the goddess Saraswati is white. So is the white swan she rides on. It is written that from a concoction of milk and water, a swan can drink milk leaving the water intact. Therefore, the ability to separate the real knowledge from the continuously growing stockpile of such a concoction of knowledge, both real and the unreal, in the limited span of human life, is symbolized by the swan.

Then there are rituals and rites associated with the worshipping ceremony. However, the act of worshipping is performed not only by the priest but also by everyone who is participating in the ceremony in remembrance of the deity. Thus the person decorating the altar and the surroundings or the person in charge of food to be offered or the person sitting quietly and meditating on the glory of the divine are all worshipping. The rites and rituals associated with religious ceremonies are parts of the Hindu cultural traditions. These are normative behaviors, prescriptions and proscriptions that we learn as we grow up. We internalize them, that is we take them for granted and do not ask why they are that way. Thus, there are dress codes, requirements of certain practices, prohibitions against others and things that can or cannot be done or offered to the deity. These have been handed down to us and there certainly were good reasons for those at the time they were formulated some of which may even be true today. Thus prohibitions against eating certain fruits and vegetables at certain times of the year for example, can perhaps be traced to health reasons or to the fact that those were not ready for human consumption at those times. Some of those would find wider acceptance because the social leaders found in their wisdom if those could be associated with religious rites. It seems that is what they did.

It seems that all of these are designed to develop the spirit of sacrifice that is to say to control and postpone sensual gratifications. The underlying idea is to create means for spiritual advancement and in the process to become better human beings and to realize that the real purpose of life is not to be the slaves of our senses that unfortunately most of us are and do not even know. Ideally, it should be otherwise and the practice of regular worship is just the first step towards reversing that relationship and gain control of our selves.

Lost In Transition

Kasturi Bose

Disembarked here in a country
Tagged as the nation of plenty
Awaits me with all its force
Getting abreast of it is really must

Everything here was that one could yearn
Modernistic fashion and style to learn
Kinsmen courteous and dollars great
But what I longed for I could not get.

I come from a place that has its failing
Maladies at large my India is ailing
Albeit its weakness and staggering flaw
Allures me there and my heart she draw

Landscape so enticing people so admirable
Cuisine so delectable simply adorable
Beckons me with its lively charm
Arms widespread please do come.

Hardly any place for motion and transit
Honking horns and all so chaotic
Narrow roads and dingy lanes
Potholes abound stinking drains

I may not come back to see you though
Men down centuries will come and go
Enchant you will the manner you do
With happiness and wealth you will woo

Rush hour traffic dirt and smoke
Jostling pushing back and forth
Nudging to get a hold on the bus
Those missing out make a fuss

Bizarre the weather with its myriad hues
Unbearable at times brings innumerable woes
Humid and dry with its gentle breeze
Cold so mild you rarely freeze

Opportunities galore no dearth of jobs
Dollars in the offing up for grabs
Life here is a really merry ride
Always on the upswing a higher tide

The land that provides my daily bread
Paves a way for a better future ahead
Cannot be denigrated at any cost
And yet I find myself completely lost

Reverence to the land with all my might
May you conquer the world far and wide
Alas time has finally come to bid adieu
And return to my country and people too

প্রভুত্তর

সুস্মিতা মহলানবীশ

লেখনীটা শুকিয়ে গেল
অভ্যাস চর্চার অভাব
হিজিবিজি মাথার মধ্যে
কি ছেড়ে কি ধরি
তবুও প্রত্যাশী আমি
হই সংযমী অভিলাষী

মসি তো কমই ছিল
শুকিয়ে হয়েছে কাঠ।
পোকাগুলি নাচে পদ্যে।
অল্পবিদ্যা ভয়ঙ্করী
মন্দ নয় উত্তম মানি।
সেই মঙ্গলাভিলাষী।

Orchestra Audition By Sounak Das (7th Grade)

Help! Help! I am scheduled
To face the master gladiator
At her rink tonight.

Reckless warriors had gone in
They all came out
Looking humbled.

They'd said to me,
"Beware of her special surprise, my friend
Beware of her special surprise"

I went in with
A sword and a stringed shield.
She imperiously said, "Come in".

She began her strike.
Sword on shield, I began as well,
The bright sounds of the metal harmonizing.

She pulled her surprise
I flinched.
But I summoned all my bravery.

I launched myself into position,
Sword in one hand, shield in the other, my friend,
Sword in one hand, shield in the other.

I left the rink with only a scratch,
And she sat, a smile forming on her face,
"Next victim!"



A Different Kind of Normal

Upasana Chandra (Age: 13)

She opens and shuts her eyes,
Waiting for a miracle,
Wishing for something new,
Wanting a different kind of normal.

She gives her clamped eyes another chance
To reopen themselves and take it in.
But it fails miserably.
She is still all alone, desolate.

She pleads to leave the world she's trapped in,
Filled with hate, anger, cruelty, lunacy,
With calamity scattered like
Stars in the inky black sky.

Once more she lets her lids drop,
Becoming barriers to icy reality.
This darkness is more comforting to her
Than anything out there could ever be.

This time she is terrified of what
May greet her once blackness is no more.
So she stays, happier than accustomed to,
In the realms of her tranquil daydreams.

It is so very sudden, the change that occurs.
A warmth floods through the fibers of her being.
A foreign feeling takes control of her mind.
We call it power—she called it harmony.

She now discovers the point of cacophony:
To transpose it into music.
She now realizes that she housed and nurtured
Power to banish the bad forever.

Fear is instantly erased from her mentality,
And suffering has finally boded farewell.
Now, as she opens up her vision once more,
She finally gets her different kind of normal.

Nature's Wonders

Aradhana Chandra (Age: 10)

The sun is beaming a grin at me
I return his greeting.
The birds are chirping their song
I wish I could join them and fly free.
The wind envelops me in a chilly hug
I, however, am warmed.
A tree houses me with shade
I feel safe now.

A few hours pass...

The owls begin hooting
I sway to the beat.
The bats' wings rustle in my face
I marvel at their innocence.
A star peeps out of the black sky and twinkles
I wink back at it.
The moon comes to take her throne

রুশ দেশের গল্প

সংকলন, ভাবানুবাদ ও স্মৃতিচারণ: শঙ্খ শুভ্র ঘোষ

কুড়ুলের জাউ

জাউ হল খিচুড়ির মতো একটা খাবার। নামটা বদলে কুড়ুলের খিচুরিও হতে পারত, পাল্টালাম না, এই নামটাই ভালো। আর যে গলপটার ভাবানুবাদ করতে চেষ্টা করছি স্মৃতি থেকে, যদুদর মনে পড়ে, এই নামটাই ছিলো, বা অন্য কোথাও শুনেছি। এটাই থাক।

সৈনিক ফিরছে তার দেশে, অনেক যুদ্ধ-টুঙ্গ পার করে তারপর। ভোজনং যত্রতত্র, শয়নং হটমন্দিরো। এমনি করে, একদিন সন্ধ্যাবেলা এসে পৌঁছাল একটা ছোট্ট গায়ে। অন্ধকারে পথ ভালো দেখা যায়না। তাছাড়া শীত, ভালুকের ভয় ও আছে, সৈনিক ঠিক করলো সামনেই কোন বাড়ি পেলে সেখানেই রাত কাটাবে।

খুঁজে পেলো এক বুড়ির বাড়ি, ছোট্ট কাঠের বাড়ি, তাতে ওই বুড়ি ছাড়া আর কেউ থাকেনা।

বুড়ির বয়স হলেও বেশ শক্ত আছে। সব শুনে টুনে মাথা নেড়ে বলে - ‘তা বাপু থাকতে দিতে পারি, কিন্তু কিছু খেতে দিতে পারবোনা, ঘরে কিছু নেই। আমিই উপোস করে আছি।’

কি করা যাবে, সৈনিক থেকেই গেলো। বসে বসে বুড়ির সঙ্গে গল্পো করে, বুড়ি তাকে এটা সেটা সুখোয়। সে বলে, চিমনির পাশে বসে আগুন পোহায়, আর খালি ভাবে ‘বড্ড খিদে.....বড্ড খিদে’।

এদিকে বুড়ির সঙ্গে আবার তাবোল বলতে বলতেই সে টের পেয়েছে বুড়ি আসলে তত গরিব না। ঘরে আছে কিছু, কিন্তু তাকে ভাগ দেবেনা, আবার পাছে সে কিছু মনে করে, তাই নিজেও খাবেনা। সৈনিক খালি ভাবে আর ফন্দি আঁটে ‘কি করা যায়?’

ভেবে ভেবে একটা বুদ্ধি খেলে যায়। ঘরের কোনে দ্যাখে একটা ভাঙ্গা কুড়ুলের হাতল পড়ে আছে, এটা সেটা বলার পরে বলে - ‘আচ্ছা বুড়ি-মা, ঘরে তো খাবার নেই, কিন্তু খানিকটা জল দিতে পারো?’

বুড়ির সন্দেহ হয়, বলে ‘তা পারি, কিন্তু কি করবে তাই দিয়ে?’

সৈনিক বলে - ‘ওই যে কুড়ুলের হাতলটা আছে, ওটা দিয়ে ‘কুড়ুলের জাউ করবো’।

বুড়ি তো অবাক, গালে হাত দিয়ে বলে - ‘সে আবার কি বাছা? এতকাল বয়স হলো, কুড়ুলের জাউ তো শুনিনি।’

সৈনিক মিটি মিটি হাসে আর বলে - ‘দ্যাখোই না কি করি’।

বুড়ি তাকে জল দেয়, সৈনিক সেই কুড়ুলের হাতলটা ভালো করে ধুয়ে কড়াইতে ফোটাতে দেয়, ফোটার আর চামচ দিয়ে নাড়ে, বুড়ি অবাক হয়ে দ্যাখে আর দ্যাখে।

কিছুক্ষণ বাদে, একটু চেখে সৈনিক বলে, - ‘আঃ খুব ভাল হচ্ছে, শুধু যদি একটু নুন পাওয়া যেতনা!’

বুড়ি বলে - ‘তা বাপু নুন আছে আমার কাছে।’

আবার নুন দিয়ে ফোটার আর নাড়ে। কিছু বাদে আবার চেখে দেখে বলে, - ‘দারুন হচ্ছে। যদি দুটুকরো আলু থাকতো, খাসা জমতো।’

বুড়ি বলে - ‘তাও দিতে পারি।’ বলে দুটো মোটে আলু দেয় ভাঁড়ার ঘর থেকে, সৈনিক সেগুলো সেদ্ধ করতে দেয়। আবার নাড়ে আর নাড়ে। আবার কিছু পরে বলে, - ‘যদি একমুঠো চাল দিতে পারতাম এতে আর দেখতে হতো না।’

বুড়ি অবাক হয়ে বলে - ‘তাই নাকি, দাঁড়াও বাছা, দেখি যদি থাকে কিছু’। বলে দেয় দুমুঠো চাল। ভাবে দেখাই যাকনা, কি দাঁড়ায়।

সৈনিক আবারো ষাঁটে, নাড়ে আর চাখে। তারপর বলে - ‘বাঃ বেশ হয়েছে। বুড়িমা, তোমাকেও দিতাম, কিন্তু একটু ডাল না পড়লে তোমার যুগ্মি হচ্ছেনা।’

বুড়ির তখন রোখ চেপেছে, বলে - ‘তাই বুঝি, তাহলে দিই একটু ডাল’। বলে দুহাতা ডাল দেয়।

সৈনিক ডাল করে চাল-ডাল-আলু সেদ্ধ করে নেয়। হয়ে গেলে বুড়িকেও ডাকে খেতে। ঠাণ্ডায়, খিদের মুখে তাই অমৃত লাগে দুজনের। খেতে বসে বুড়ির মুখে হাসি আর ধরেনা, বলে - ‘দেখ দিকি! এত ভালো কুড়ুলের জাউ খেতে হবে কেউ ভাবতে পেরেছিল?’

সৈনিক খালি মিটি মিটি হাসে আর খেয়ে চলে।

Twin Souls

Swapan Mondal

Satyanarjan Mukhopadhyay and I have been friends for a long time. After 29 years, I still remember the improbable way in which we met, and the subsequent coincidences which kept cropping up in our lives, keeping us together. Sometimes I feel our lives have been touched by a higher power, or how else are you going to explain the events that have constantly brought us together? Read on, and see for yourself!

After my first day of school at BE College, Sibpur, I went to the Botanical Gardens to escape the “ragging” in the hostel. I had come to hostel the previous night from Bankura town. My experiences in the first 24 hours at the school were not so inviting, that I would prefer to stay in the hostel during the evenings.

At the Botanical Gardens, I decided to explore how large it was. When I was deep inside the park, all of a sudden, it started raining heavily, the way it does only in the movies. I looked for shelter and could only find a big culvert pipe lying a few feet away. As soon as I entered one side of the pipe, I noticed the presence of another boy of my age on the other end. I was a bit surprised at first, but it did not take me a long to realize that we had had the same plan – to escape the ragging in the hostel!

We moved towards the middle of the pipe and introduced ourselves. His name was Satyanarjan Mukhopadhyay and he happened to be in the same department- Electronics & Telecommunications Engineering (ETC), too. What is the chance of meeting another 1st year ETC student from the same school in the Botanical Gardens? 1 in 11, I guess (30 out of 320 total enrollments). We quickly became good friends. Since our last names are very close in alphabetical order, we belonged to the same section too. On our 2nd day in school, we sat together and soon finished the entire 4-year school as lab partners, project partners and also final project partners!

After Engineering College, we applied for the same entrance tests – BALCO (Bharat Aluminum Corporation), BHEL and SAIL etc. Our interviews were also scheduled on the same days! So we went together for interviews to Delhi for BALCO by the Kalka Express, and for BHEL at the Great Eastern Hotel. He went to the SAIL interview, but I did not. But that too was scheduled for the same day! After all these interviews, we had NO connection for two months. He was from Pandua and I was from Bankura. Neither of us had telephones at home in those days. There was no correspondence either.

In the meantime, I got both the jobs - from BALCO, posting at MP and from BHEL, posting at Bangalore. I decided to join BHEL, even though I was interested in BALCO since it was closer to West Bengal. BHEL asked me to join any day within the next 30 days. I chose my own date towards the end of the period and came to Kharagpur Railway Station to catch the Coromandel Express to Bangalore. Shishir Ghosh, a batch-mate of us, came to see me off. Amazingly, he saw Satya filling up his water bottle at the railway platform. I was surprised, but happy to see my old buddy, little realizing that he too had decided to join BHEL at Bangalore and had chosen the

same day on which to travel! Satya boarded the train at Howrah. I was traveling in the 1st class and he was in the 2nd class (although BHEL had offered us 1st class railway fares). Satya stayed with me in the 1st class compartment talking, until the ticket collector asked him to go to his compartment late that night. I came to know from Satya that he had also received the offer from BALCO and SAIL, but decided to join BHEL. In Bangalore, BHEL had three offices (one across IISc, one on MG Road and the other on Mysore road). We were both posted to the Mysore Road location! After reaching Bangalore, we decided to stay together. Two of us stayed together until I left for USA for higher studies. In between, I got a job in ONGC and Satya got a job at PTT through IES. Neither of us took the job, finally, even though we were 99% sure we were going to take them.

Satya followed the same route and came to USA. We stayed in touch. He visited me from his school in Florida after I moved to Atlanta from Houston. Once he got his green card while working in Florida, I asked him to move to Atlanta. At that time, all houses in my subdivision were sold except for one or two. He moved into one of them at my insistence! Since 1997, we have been staying together in the same subdivision! To top it all, both our sons are named Rohan! Twin souls? You decide. I will provide you with an update 25 years from now!

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