



RHYVERS BEAT

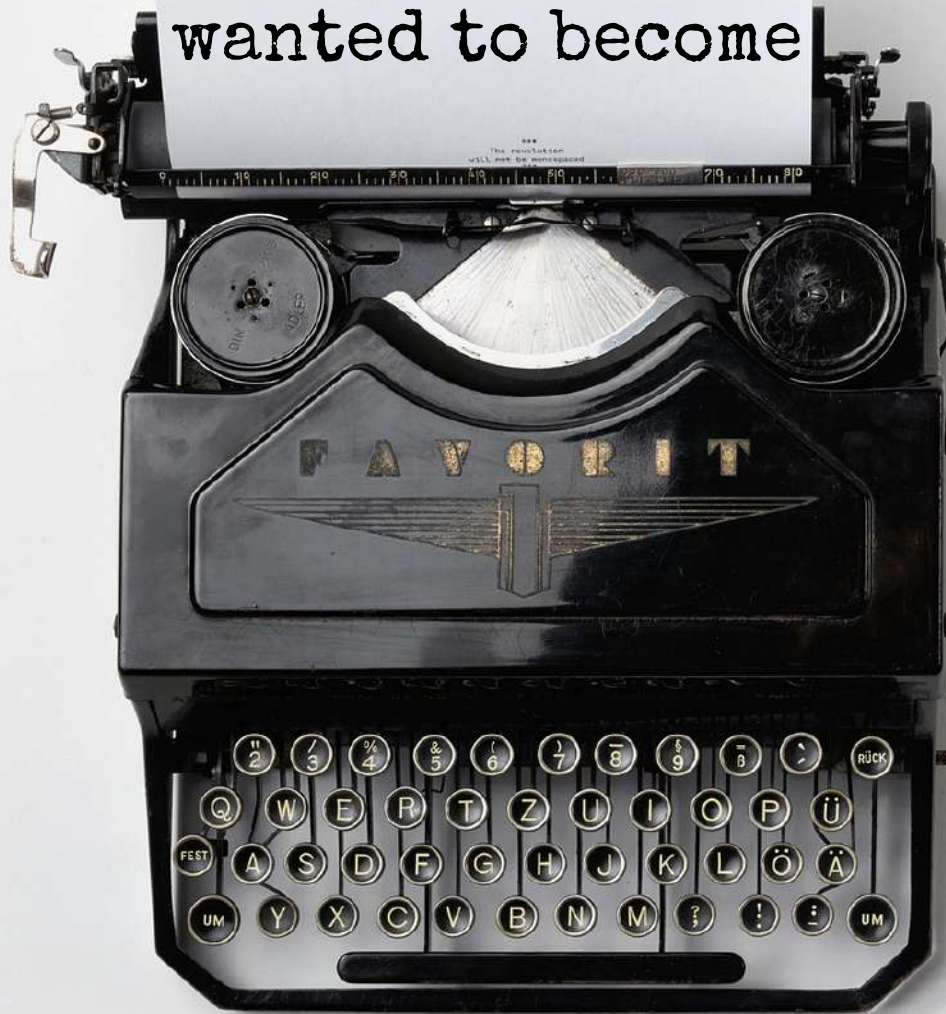
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FROM THE DESK OF EDITOR IN CHIEF

Happy New Year - 2023

The count of days (Sunday to Saturday) and hours (01 to 24) continues to be the same. Yet the change of a calendar has marked a New Beginning in time. It is supplemented with new resolutions, new plans, a renewed energy to pursue our most cherished dreams and desires.

Promise of the New carries magic. It has always inspired man - new life within the womb, seeds sprouting in the soil, the cracking of an egg in the nest, the bud blooming on the plant. Also, a new chapter of a book wherein, dawn to dusk, the story is entirely individual!

At Rhyvers Beat, the spring of excitement bursts anew with every edition. It's the thrill of fulfilling our commitment to bring the best to our readers. Of offering new forums to our contributors.

Even as dots joined make a line and happening moments make a lifetime - may each breath bring exciting freshness to existence.

Best Wishes For New Beginnings!

Affan Yesvi
Affan Yesvi



FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S DESK



DR. SONIKA SETHI

“If winter comes can spring be far behind?”

The earth where we dwell sends us continuous reminders of new beginnings with every little sapling that cracks open the crust of the soil above, with every verdant leaf that adorns the bare branches of trees post-autumn, with every bud that unravels itself into the prettiest of blossom despite its ephemeral existence and with every sunrise that tears through the dark shroud of the night.

Life is a cyclical process with every ending leading to a new beginning and vice versa. Plato said, *“The beginning is the most important part of the work.”* It is always easy to give up hope and to give in to despair. However, courage lies in picking up the loose ends and starting life afresh. Had Thomas Edison given up on his experiments when he failed over a thousand times, he would not have invented the light bulb. When a reporter asked Edison, “How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?”

Edison replied, “I didn’t fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps.”

Every new beginning is a stepping stone towards our choice of destination. New beginnings become all the more significant after failures. Remember how King Bruce of Scotland who had lost all hope after six unsuccessful attempts against the King of England, learnt the lesson of perseverance and fresh beginnings from a mere spider?

Life throws us curve balls at every turn- physical, emotional, psychological, financial, professional and personal. At times like these, we must learn to retain fortitude and start afresh for “Every sunset is an opportunity to reset.”

It is time for all of us to leave behind the baggage of 2022 as we usher into a new beginning with the advent of 2023. Our contributors for the January issue bring forth, through poetry and prose, some untold stories and emotions that herald new beginnings of grit and determination.

We wish our readers,

Happy Reading! Happy Musing! Happy New Year!

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Peace Joy and Freedom!

*And a strong wind blew
from East to West
and the bells stopped
to play their chimes
mothers and children united
their hearts in an instant.*

*The hands and legs
of a thousand men on the march
raised the friendly dust
of dreams held in the body
with the power of ideas
and scattered words,
expected life values,
they became spears of fire.
How many closed windows
they opened to the cry of pain
and how many high towers
they fell to the song of vivid remembrance
and how many doors were opened
letting the sea overflow.
The already dark night has passed,
the sun shines in the sky,
it's the stars now that warm
the thoughts of so many silent people
there is no more time for torments
to give mourning and wars
today is the dawn of the new day
that he will give forever to everyone
Peace Joy and Freedom!*



FRANCESCO FAVETTA

is a poet from Sciacca, Sicily (Italy).
He is the founder of a theatre
company, Theatrum Socialis Sciacca



Beginning of A New Camaraderie

I often shoo away my drooping spirits by opening a small window of my choice in the 80 year old world of nostalgia. It invariably helps me to replace all troublesome and harassing thoughts of struggle with the limited days ahead with positivity and hope. And I hold my peace thereafter, reminding myself of what Edwin Lutyens said, "As faith wills, fate fulfils." Every bitter winter when the temperature where I live plummets below 4 degrees Celsius, I walk down the memory lane and revisit my days of walking on Indus during extreme winter and the chopper rides to higher posts when I was commanding a battalion at Leh during 1986-88. No politician can ever understand what a soldier goes through at such high-altitude posts because they visit military garrisons only in summer for a couple of hours, have tea and pakoras, and go through the ritual of a photo-op of their sojourn before taking the special/earliest flight back to Delhi.

My battalion HQ was just about 1.5 km from the make-shift airport and was bang on the Indus river. My predecessor had constructed a beautiful gazebo and that was the other reason for many VIPs crowding our Officers Mess during the months of May and June. However, no one dared to visit us during the harsh winters. During these months the most important question everyone from GOC to the junior-most soldiers had in mind, every morning, was- whether AN-12 flight, the life-line of all of us, was likely to land that day or not?

At times, we would be cut-off from the world for seven days at a stretch. The beautiful river would become a greyish slate of ice by the end of December



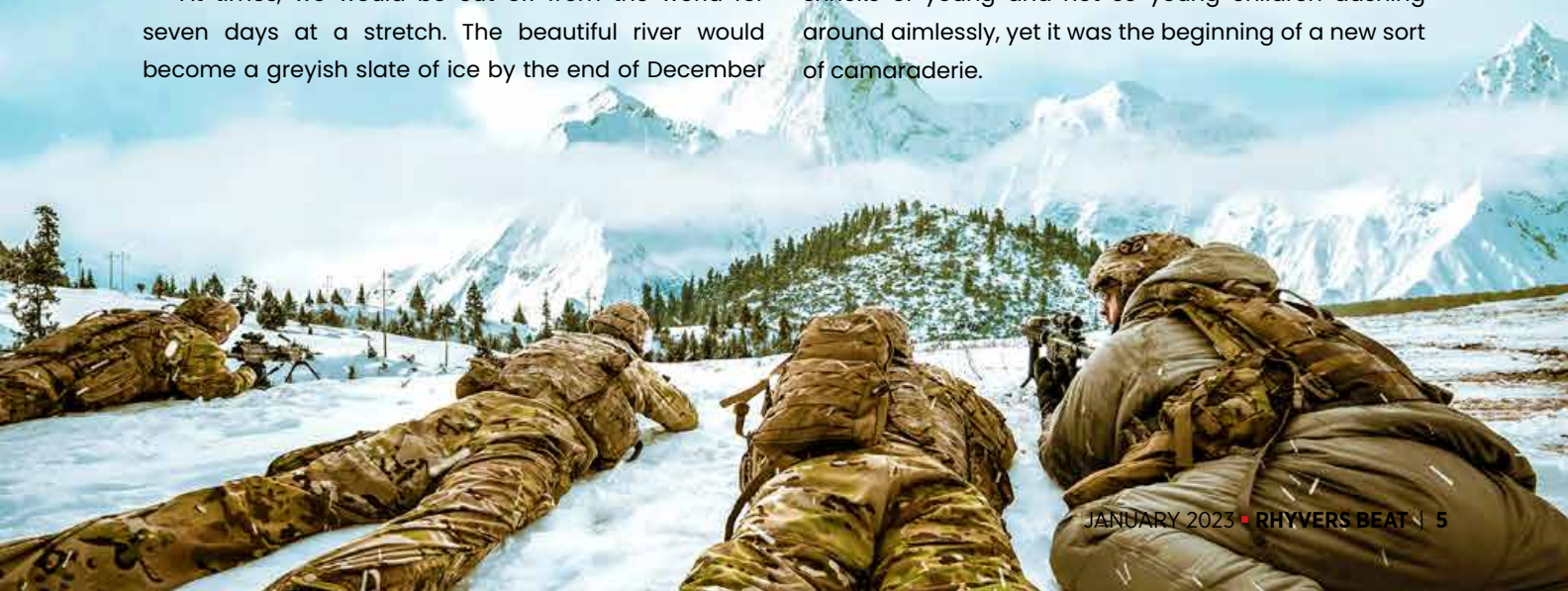
**COL. D S CHEEMA
(RETD.)**

served Indian army with distinction for 31 years. He is a post-graduate in Engineering and Management.

and would remain in that state till mid-February. I would often ask for volunteers to accompany me for a walk on the frozen river on sunny days, stand still for minutes, appreciate the snow-clad peaks all around and mother-earth covered with a huge white sheet lending serenity to the entire surroundings. One could not help offering a silent bow to the wonders of nature. I wanted to stretch like a giant and touch and feel every peak.

Since walking on the slippery ice can be extremely risky especially during mornings, it was only after noon that one could dare to take the adventurous trip. Though, these were the toughest days, in a way these were also the happier days. We were left to ourselves and droves of unwelcome guests from the planes didn't bother us. My 2IC and local Company Commanders would organize a picnic party on rare sunny Sundays. Huge multi-coloured umbrellas would be pitched and portable tables and chairs were placed aesthetically under them to give the look of a billionaire's pool party.

A junior officer was responsible for digging a pit and placing enough beer bottles at least an hour before the RV time. Around 12:30 some officer would escort me to the venue that was hardly 200 meters away. Of course, everyone missed the ladies with trendy hairstyles, heavy embroidered suits and sarees in latest designs and trendy footwear that added colour to similar get-togethers during summer months; as also the joyful shrieks of young and not so young children dashing around aimlessly, yet it was the beginning of a new sort of camaraderie.





Goodbye!

*Goodbye poverty, goodbye half-hungry days,
Goodbye bedbugs, tattered pillowcase.
Goodbye leaky roof, that which smudged
My hard-worked science record books.
Goodbye creaky hand-pump spewing water
Only at odd hours in the night!*

*Goodbye low tile roof full of spiders and creepy crawlies.
Goodbye stone grinder, that gave me blisters on my palms.*

*Today, we say goodbye...To
An ancestral home of twenty years.
My mother's eyes are moist,
she came to this house, a young bride
And never managed to get out of it.
Today, I'm releasing her of the burden
Of attachment to you, O House...*

*For the one who made you my dad, is no longer here.
My mother walks out of the threshold
As if in a coffin...the way her mother had told her...
'You go in as a bride and come out as a corpse'
I pull her to her senses...*

*"A new home awaits you. Us. There is nothing left here.
Nostalgia will come and go
We are moving to create a new nostalgia.
Say goodbye, here."
All three of us, alone, calm and content,
We truly say Goodbye.*



KAMAR SULTANA SHEIK

a poet, writing mostly on themes of spirituality, mysticism and nature with a focus on Sufi Poetry, hails from Chennai

A New Life in the Forties

No sooner does a young girl find a decent job than her parents lodge a groom hunting expedition. Matrimony followed by maternity consume like anything. The initial years of family life are akin to a giant roller coaster ride. The young woman is always on her toes, racing to finish her endless chores, balancing her familial and professional commitments.

Managing a kitchen is a Herculean task. Even an accomplished woman has to unlearn her skills and begin afresh as per her new home's preferences. The initial years of schooling is an endless saga of tiffin and snacks. Slogging and pestering everyone to partake nutritious, appetising, delectable fare. Umpteen visits to stock up your pantry and replenishing mysteriously disappearing snacks. After years of gobbling your food on the run, cajoling kids, a sumptuous meal with your spouse is a luxury, once the kids are off to hostel.

She aesthetically arranges her home—a vase here, a rug there, plants and pieces de art. No sooner does her infant begins to crawl than the bric-a-brac are perched safely out of bound. As the kids run around keeping a decent home becomes difficult. Teenagers literally put a mother's patience to test: clothes tumble out of cupboards, numerous pieces hang precariously on pegs and dressing looks like a cosmetic store. Once the bags are packed off to hostel, the home presents a picturesque advertisement look.

She has to pass through the rigmarole: meals, laundry, supervising studies, cocurricular activities, pick up and drops, illness and accidents, examination

and competitions, her professional commitments and career advancement plus her familial and social obligations. So one fine blessed day you drop your kids to their institute and the stark reality hits you hard! No more kitchen romance and a spic and span home. Definitely a turning point in a woman's life. Either plunge into despair / despondency of empty nest syndrome or bounce back vibrantly.

This is now the time to pay attention to self. Dwindling health and body issues need redressal. Pick up a physical activity: walk, yoga, aerobics. Try meditation or a spiritual pursuit. Pamper yourself.

Visit a salon, enjoy relaxing, rejuvenating spa/sauna. Pay attention to your attire. No alibi for sloppy, dowdy appearance. Look good, feel good.

Catch up on your friends, acquaintances and colleagues. Better still, join a group of like-minded fellows and engage in a participatory activity. Align to a social cause— pay back initiative perspective. Celebrate life, laugh aloud.

Inculcate a creative hobby, any activity to ensure creative satisfaction. Ignite a dormant talent, a desire relegated aside all these years. Brush up and spend some satisfying time creating your own masterpiece. Twiddle your green thumb. Tend to your minuscule patch. Rejoice as new leaves unfold, floret blooms. Pay obeisance to the Muse, unearth the Milton/Shakespeare in you. Pick up your quill. See how the words tumble.

Let yourself blossom. With a satisfaction of having fulfilled your duties as a wife/mother, time to be your own self. On a note of positivity embark on a new journey, usher in a new beginning...



**SURUCHI KALRA
CHOUDHARY**

Associate Professor
and Head, Department
of English, Hindu
Girls College, Jagadhri
(Haryana)



A Real Beginning

An Year Long Wish

*This New Year, don't wish for change,
Be the change in someone's life.
This Holi, don't play with colours,
Bring back the colours into someone's life.*

*This Dusherra don't burn evil effigies,
Become the good energy in someone's life.
This Diwali, don't light fire crackers,
Be the fire that lights up someone's life.*

*On Eid don't just pray, fast and feast,
But be the warm embrace in someone's life.
When Christmas comes, don't buy gifts,
Be the glorious gift in someone's life.*

*So that when the New Year dawns anew,
The 'new beginning' will really be - You.*



**DR. DEVIYANI
SINGH**

has a PhD in
'International
Terrorism'. She taught
at Delhi University and
worked with the Lok
Sabha Secretariat.



The Voyage

“Pranika Puri!” a full-throated exclamation rocks the so-called parking lot of Pranika’s office. Her mind—brimming with tumultuous thoughts—she is in a hurry to leave. She stares impatiently at the tall, stout, bearded man walking towards her. The guy clasps her hands with audacious familiarity and gushes, “Paani-Puri!” Flabbergasted, she feels that she’ll drop down dead. After 15 years, Pranika’s painful past has rashly overtaken her—Vikram Bajwa—her first love!

Long suppressed humiliation is stirred-up, thrusting Pranika down the memory lane. Vikram’s first day at school—the charismatic boy, with a red *patka*—faking compliments at girls—his first prank on her, which had left her hating him like hell, his infamous musk she had inhaled on the day her dance partner was absent and she had to practice with him, his first compliment... “deep, seductive eyes” that had kept the timid, self-conscious Pranika awake for nights that followed and finally, Vikram asking her for a coffee date!

Ah! That catastrophic coffee date. Before leaving the house, she had caught some pieces of Aunt Mahima’s conversation with *maa* in the drawing-room, “...finding a groom for such an ordinary girl...plain...arrogant...melancholy...”

Hopeful of having a beautiful time with Vikram, Pranika had gulped the hurt and left. She entered the ‘Brownified Patisserie’ with a pounding heart, and shared the sad story with him. Vikram clutched her cold fingers in his warm palms and soothed her, “People have their opinions. Dump them, my tulip!” Then, to lighten her mood, chuckled, “By the way,



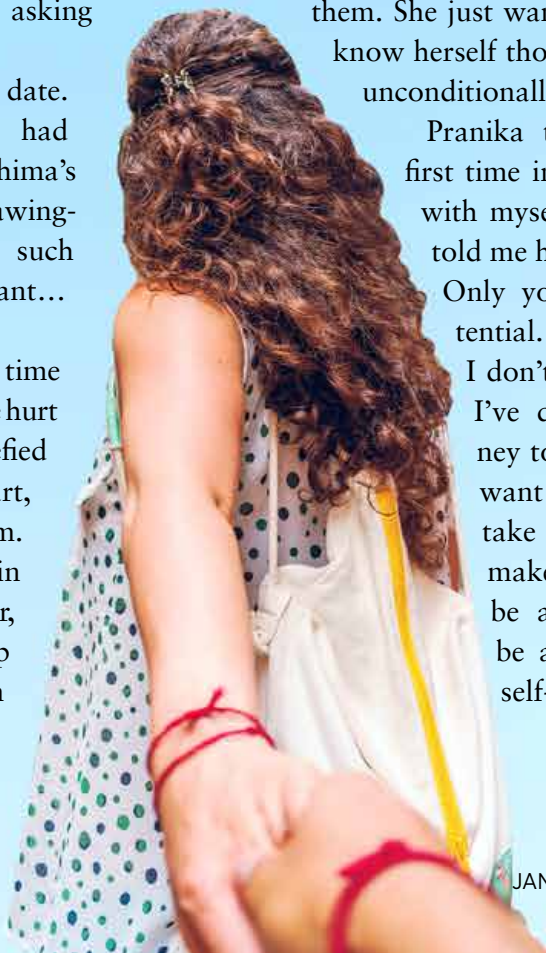
POOJA SINGAL
is an Assistant
Professor of English
in Haryana.

Mahima, Auntie has a point...” Pranika was too maimed to relish his joke. She instantaneously quit both, the patisserie and Vikram’s life, never to look back again.

Vikram shakes Pranika by the shoulders, and she crash-lands into the present. Without any ado, he proposes, “Paani-Puri, will you marry me?” Pranika, blinded by the indelible memories of hurt, hisses “No. Go, find someone fit for yourself.”

It is a déjà vu feeling for Pranika. This very morning Sameer proposed marriage to her. Sameer Malhotra—her office buddy for the last four years—the gentleman who has taught her to trust her own worth. Though she loves being with him, his marriage proposal seemed weird. At that moment, Pranika failed to fathom, why she was upset at Sameer’s proposal. She had asked herself, “Do I still want Vikram?” But, now, just now, she has discerned that she wants neither of them. She just wants herself. She wants to know herself thoroughly and love herself unconditionally.

Pranika texts Sameer, “For the first time in my life, I am at peace with myself. People have always told me horrible things about me. Only you have valued my potential. Sameer, I love you, but I don’t need a man right now. I’ve decided to take a journey to discover my real self! I want to know myself. It might take long. As of now, I can’t make any commitments. Just be around if you can and be a part of my voyage of self-discovery.”



New Beginnings

*A dowdy little wriggly bursts out of a constraining cocoon
to become a brilliantly hued butterfly to liberating freedom;
Parched earth cracks to joust a seedling to sprout a tiny head
to revel in the joy of pure air elixir, to begin a journey as a green-grove;
A wind rush under the eaglet wings precariously poised over a cliff hanger
Soars into new skies, new flights, new discoveries;
Tiny raindrops on a tryst with the mother cloud
Glazed with trepidation over the immense fall
But through throes sparkle prisms in scaling new horizons;
Babbling brooks rumble over rocks
On entree into the big O, to merge in new infinites;
Phantasm of souls peeping into fabled heavens for promised blisses
That were eulogized on lands lived below;
Lone weary hearts feeling the calm of mature loves
A new springs spirit from winter relationship doldrums;
Like a bud being caressed by solar kiss on a dew filled morn
Fresh lights boulevard into a world of colour and fragrance;
The first stroke on a masterpiece penned by adrenaline running high;
Everything, anything new, always has a new beginning built in itself,
A title in double zest is "NEW BEGINNINGS"*



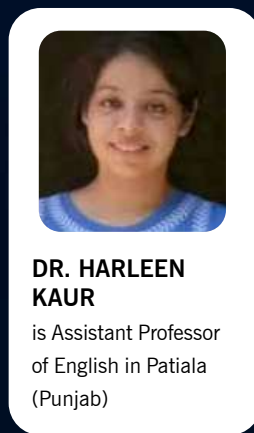
**SUREKHA
SREENIVASAN**

works for the
T.I.M.E. Institute
and has 8 Anthologies
to her credit.



The Formidable New Moon in My Sky

I have always had a fascination for the lonely harbinger of light in the night sky- the moon. In addition to being constantly fed with the fetishization of moonlight by our beloved Bollywood, I recall frequently confabbing with the spotted achromatic beauty in my younger years. The moon is a loyal refuge for the lonesome. It is a comforting sight adorning the otherwise nocturnal and scary hours. Synonymous with the cycle of life particularly the gradual intensification of passion and grit until a climactic and charismatic persona is acquired only to dissolve into the sky eventually, for rebirth. In the waxing phase, it imparts the essential lessons of mettle, determination, and ambition. In the waning phase, it is reminiscent of optimism, gratitude, and grace. Apart from being exceptionally appealing for its beauty, it is representative of numerous clandestinely held notions which constitute the evil facet of a self. It shields the patiently preserved vices as an indispensable part of a person. It, however, vouches for a whole existence- the good as well as the bad. As they say, whether crescent or not, the moon is always full. It is the rhythm of life itself. Moreover, the best part of this peculiar entity is that it is wonderfully spotted which makes it original and real- just the way we all should be. It seems as if it understands what it means to be human. Oh, the perfect freckled beauty!



**DR. HARLEEN
KAUR**

is Assistant Professor
of English in Patiala
(Punjab)

Being a selenophile, I named my daughter Mehnoor, which loosely translates to moonlight. She is the light of my life, the first and the last moment of my day, quite literally. No wonder she is bright, charming, and pretty. She is also quite troublesome and difficult at times. She is extremely demanding and annoyingly naughty. She is obstinate to the point of driving me crazy. However, I wish she grows up to be as spotted as the moon. She should own her flaws and be a lighthouse for others. Be the little warrior in the

dark! As the author Shannon L. Alder has written "The moon will guide you through the night with her brightness, but she will always dwell in the darkness, in order to be seen."

Just as the moon illuminates the sky, she is going to be the only radiance of my life. She must learn to be resilient and equanimous in comportment. It is challenging and frustrating to raise a child like that, and I have begun to feel that motherhood is not my cup of tea. But I am ready to wear myself out for her. If she is making a beeline for a worthy life, I stand in support of her.

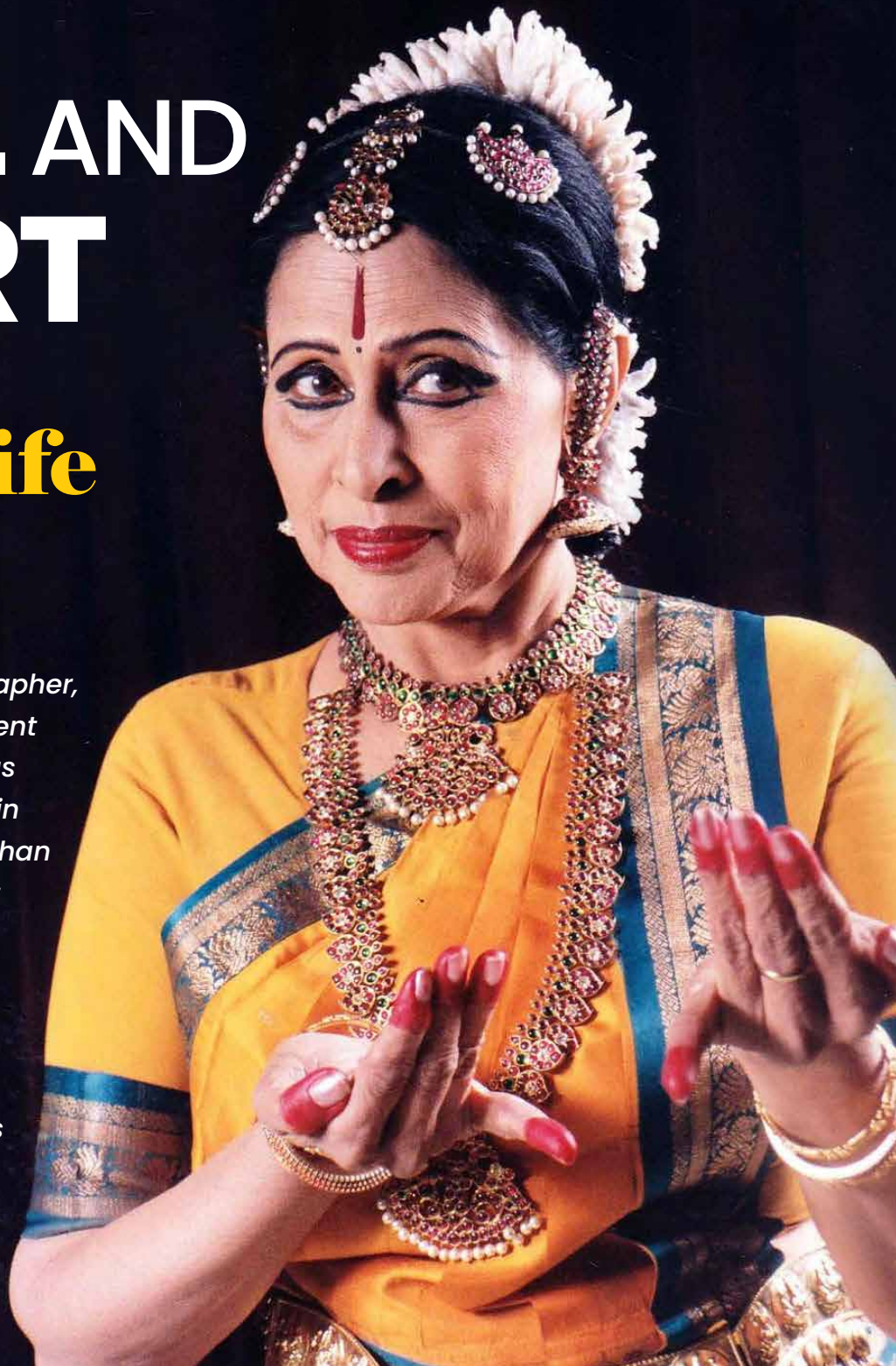
I hope she imbibes invincible strength, courage, and will-power. I sincerely wish her to be whole- a human with unmatched compassion and vitality. May she be the beaming trailblazer for the lost and the defeated. May she be the moon for the times to come.

DANCE IS MY SOUL AND HEART

It's my life

Mrs Saroja Vaidyanathan, born in 1937, is a choreographer, guru and a notable exponent of Bharatanatyam. She was conferred the Padma Shri in 2002 and the Padma Bhushan in 2013 by the Government of India.

In conversation with Team Rhyvers Beat, Mrs Vaidyanathan spoke of her illustrious journey as a Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer.



Ma'am, your dance repertoire has been appreciated for revolving around subjects ranging from mythology to the current social issues. What issues have been dear to your heart, which you focused on in the dance performances?

I have choreographed many performances on different myths and also modern subjects. But I love to do anything with nature and our mother earth.

I regard some issues close to my heart, like the five elements; Nakshatra; Navagraha; Nature's calamities; Paramacharya life history; Swachh Bharat; Jal (water); Pradosham, Bharathi (patriotism) etc.

Your work as a choreographer has been hailed for over a score of enthralling ballets. What are the differences of style and presentation among the Bharatnatyam dancers and choreographers that you observe today?

I have choreographed ballets only within the Bharatanatyam style. There are diverse styles and presentations in vogue. These may be Bharatnatyam and kathak (jugalbandi), Adishankara Mandan Misra Vad Vivad Ballet etc.

I always loved to do new innovations. This does not mean coming out of my style, but the choreography, music and the presentation create an immense difference to a performance.

I had presented a ballet on HIV AIDS. It was really appreciated by the public and also the press, and the ballet was presented many times. The ballet on Dasavatar and my explanation of our current history was greatly applauded.

I have done Bharatha natyam on stage and yoga on an elevated stage. So we had 14 dancers and yoga practitioners with one music and chanting karanas.

We also presented the *Amrit Manthan* (churning the ocean for nectar) ballet, the Bhasmasur and Mohini ballet, and the Apsara (Urvashi) ballet.

Glorious Journey

In 2017, Mrs Saroja Vaidyanathan organized the 27 hours of Bharatanatyam Marathon relay at Ganesa Natyalaya. This was awarded the Record Breaking certificate by the Asia Book of Records and the India Book of Records for the Longest (27hr 30 mins) Bharatanatyam Dance Marathon Relay. She also compiled an Encyclopedia on Bharatanatyam for NCERT.

One of the most notable choreographies by Mrs S Vaidyanathan is the Bharatanatyam cultural segment for the Queen's Baton Relay in 2009. In 2010, she choreographed the cultural segment for the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony. One of her most remarkable choreographies was the Bharatanatyam segment for 1700 dancers for the Opening ceremony of World Cultural Festival, organized in 2016 in New Delhi by Sri Sri Ravishankar.

In 2017, Mrs S Vaidyanathan organized the Yoga and Bharatanatyam (five elements) for International Yoga Day celebrations organized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.

You built a Kathak School in Bhagalpur in Bihar in 1972. How was the response to a kathak school in Bihar, which was seen as a backward region?

In 1972, my husband Mr C R Vaidyanathan, IAS, was Commissioner Bhagalpur in Bihar. I organized a three days music and dance festival. We collected and built a big hall for a kathak school, Sharadha Sangeet Sadan. They named it Saroja Bhawan. Now I have some professional and young disciples from Bihar who are doing very well.

A woman in a light blue shirt and shorts stands with her back to the camera on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean under a cloudy sky. In the foreground, a large paw print is visible in the sand.

The First Step

*It's never too late to yearn for what you want,
Never too late for new beginnings,
Never too late for a fresh start.*

Change can be daunting...

*Don't allow fear to stop you from evolving,
Nothing should halt you from a new launch.*

*Take the first step in faith with full grace,
In different ways, the new beginnings await,
Howsoever difficult the past may be,
There is always scope to emerge again.*

*She, believed in the magic of fresh start,
It was not easy for her to let go of the past,
It broke her down,
It made her cry,
The way you fall when you learn to fly.
The new days were getting ready,
As she was brave enough to say goodbye,
Doors to the future opened,
The first step towards getting to new life was...
To decide.*



ANU GIRDHAR

is Professor and HoD in National Dental College, Punjab. She is the author of two books- *As the Life Unfolds* and *Heartstrings*.

Quest

*I was in conflict within myself
Something was tearing me apart
Who was I and where was I to go?
I was ignorant and insecure
The lightning struck
The clouds of my mind mingled
There was a downpour as never before
Yes! There Was a way
Within these shrouded clouds
I floated in sheer ecstasy
The searching mind found
The object of its quest
I had discovered Myself
Within me!
Time for a new beginning...*



ABHA JOSHI SHARMA

is a Senior Architect with the Government of Punjab. She lives in Chandigarh and dabbles in poetry and prose.



Cheers To A New Beginning

*The chapter has terminated.
It was rough, it was hard,
But showed me the reality stark
Anxiety about future had devoured my peace of mind,
But now the Almighty seems merciful
And Life- beautiful.*

*Turbulence in the seas has calmed,
For stability is the new hallmark
Enjoying every moment of bliss,
And letting no moment go amiss
Seeing the varied hues of Nature,
Companionship is joyous too,
Forgetting past like an ugly dream,
For happiness is now replete
My life has found purpose- a meaning*

O Friend,

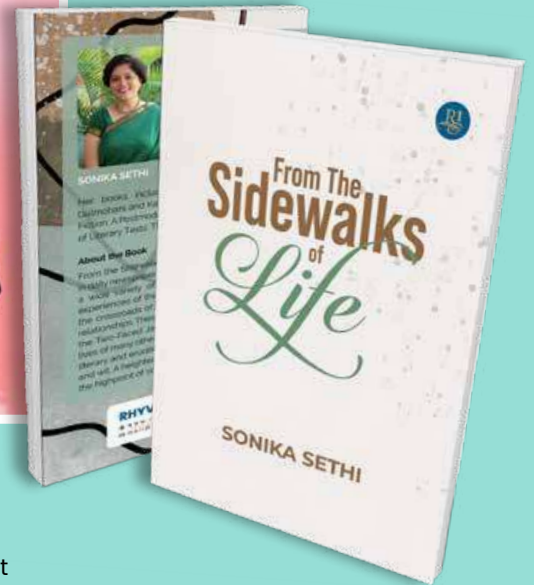
*Would you join me in my celebration as I say
'Cheers' to a new beginning?*



STAFFY BHATEJA
is a poet, editor
and painter from
Chandigarh



Poet Divya Abeera's collection of Hindi poems 'Sukoon-e-Abeera' launched by Dr. Sumita Misra, IAS, Festival Director Literati and Founder Chairperson, Chandigarh Literary Society, Author and Historian Rana Safvi, Poet Azhar Iqbal and Affan Yesvi, Director Rhyvers Media Group.



Author and columnist Dr. Sonika Sethi's sixth book 'From the Sidewalks of Life' launched by Member of Parliament Raghav Chadha; Dr. Sumita Misra, IAS, Festival Director Literati and Founder Chairperson, Chandigarh Literary Society; Executive Editor, Hindustan Times Ramesh Vinayak; Senior Journalist and Author Rasheed Kidwai and Affan Yesvi, Director Rhyvers Media Group.



Divya Abeera



Dr. Sonika Sethi

AT A GLANCE



16-18 December 2022 | Lake Club, Chandigarh





AT A GLANCE



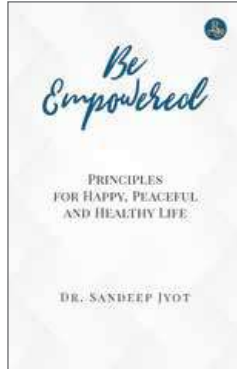
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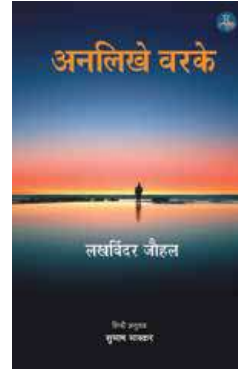
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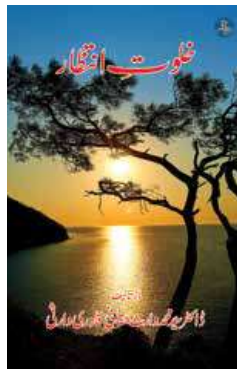
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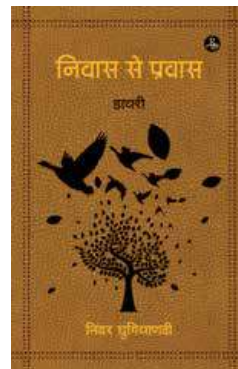
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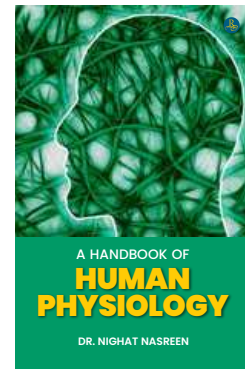
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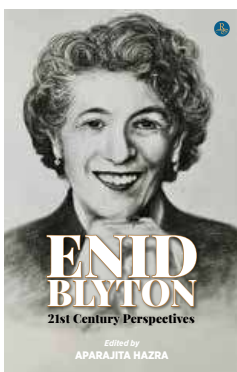
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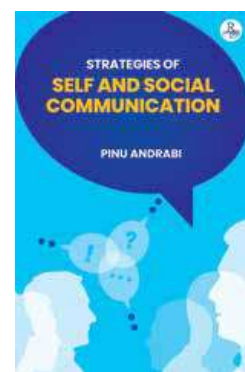
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