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EDITOR IN CHIEF

Affan Yesvi

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Dr. Sonika Sethi

REGIONAL EDITOR- CANADA

Anuradha Grover Teja

CONSULTING EDITOR

Rajni Shaleen Chopra

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Email: rhyverspress@gmail.com

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 editor@rhyvers.com


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FROM THE DESK OF EDITOR IN CHIEF

The flowers are in vibrant bloom, the trees are swaying, birds are singing and butterflies are emerging. It is the season of hope - the promise of inspiration, the promise of new beginnings.

Spring is the season of new life and regrowth. It represents youth, and brings with it happiness and joy.

After a cold, harsh winter, nothing lifts our spirits like seeing early spring flowers popping up around us. As the weather warms and days get longer, our whole perspective shifts.

As the famous poet Pablo Neruda wrote: "You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming."

Spring brings transformation and change - from darkness to light, from cold to warmth, from grey to bursts of colour. The new life, new beginnings, and bright, colorful new look that spring brings are hopeful signs that life on this earth renews again and again.

Spring is an 'experience in immortality', observed Henry David Thoreau. As we enter the season of hope and love, our writers and poets bring to you the various hues of spring - a lovely reminder of what a beautiful change can truly be.

These pages are filled with hope, happiness, love and joy. Soak them in, enjoy them, fall in love and experience it as we herald the season of hope and new beginnings.

Happy reading.

Affan Yesvi

FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S DESK



DR. SONIKA SETHI

*Spring is like a perhaps hand
(which comes carefully
out of Nowhere) arranging
a window, into which people look
(while people stare
arranging and changing placing
carefully there a strange
thing and a known thing here) and
changing everything carefully*

(Spring is like a perhaps hand by e.e. cummings)

Verdant leaves, multi-hued blossoms, clear azure skies and a radiant sun in the Vernal Equinox. This is how life's defined as winter slowly ebbs away giving space to the cheery spring. Earth sheds its drab moroseness to revel once again in brighter shades like the chrysalis metamorphosing into a vibrant butterfly.

Spring has always been symbolic of youth, new beginnings and transformation. The season is also associated with rebirth and resurgence. Plants sprout, flowers bloom, birds and animals lay eggs and give birth to young ones, thus promising romance, new life and a fresh hope of renewal. Poets and authors have since ages made use of the season to indicate Hope. Charlotte Bronte in Jane Eyre suggests,

*"Spring drew on...and a greenness grew over those brown beds,
which, freshening daily, suggested the thought that Hope traversed
them at night, and left each morning brighter traces of her steps."*

The March issue of Rhyvers Beat is dedicated to 'Spring' and our contributors have come up with some scintillating poetry and prose based on the theme.

The season also holds prominence in Hindu calendar as it coincides with the month of *Falgun* as we celebrate the festival of colours- Holi. So drench yourself in the kaleidoscopic world of spring and bask in the glory of nature. We wish our readers,

Happy Reading! Happy Writing! Happy Holi!

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BASANT

The Season of Devotion

The Sufi saints were revered because they showed the path to the Divine with the most benevolent love and grace. They taught that the path of love was the way to realize God. For them, love of God meant love of humanity.

While the kings ruled the land, the saints ruled the hearts. The vision of Sufi saints was so evolved and encompassing that even though centuries have passed, they are loved and worshipped in equal measure. Their most cherished teaching was total love and surrender to the Divine.

For the Sufi mystics, there was no self. There

was no 'I'. They taught their followers that there is only one reality, one truth, and that is the Divine. This was marked by total dissolution of the self, where only the Divine remained.

The total dissolution of the self is seen in Hazrat Amir Khusrau, the cherished *mureed* (disciple) of the great Sufi mystic, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. One of the legends related to Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and Hazrat Amir Khusrau goes like this:

Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya did not have children. He was deeply attached to his sister's son, Khwaja Taqiuddin Nuh. Tragically, Khwaja Nuh



Photo © Affan Yesvi

died at a tender age due to illness. This saddened the saint. Immersed in this sadness, the saint would not smile. His devotees, especially Khusrau, longed to see the great saint smile.

It is said that one day, Hazrat Amir Khusrau saw a group of rustic women dressed in yellow clothes, singing songs and carrying yellow flowers. He asked the women why were they dressed in yellow, and why were they singing.

The women told him that they were going to the temple to offer prayers to God, and they were wearing yellow clothes to welcome the season of *basant* (spring).

Hazrat Amir Khusrau asked them if such celebrations would make their God happy? The women told him that yes, their deity would be happy to see them singing and celebrating, wearing yellow clothes and carrying yellow flowers.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau immediately dressed up in a yellow saree, plucked some mustard flowers and went to the saint, singing a song of *basant*. It did not matter to him that he was the royal poet, and one of the most cherished jewels of

the court of the Sultan. For Hazrat Amir Khusrau, there was no 'I'. The only reality, the only truth was his *Murshid*, his *Peer*.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya was amused to see Khusrau dressed in a saree, carrying flowers and singing. Looking at Khusrau singing the beautiful song of *basant*, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya smiled.

His *murshid's* smile was all that Hazrat Amir Khusrau sought. He dissolved into tears of gratitude and joy.

Bulle Shah, the Sufi philosopher of 16th century sang:

'Ikk nukte vichh gall mukdi hai...' (All is contained in only One, Only You, Only the Divine).

Come 18th century, the divine realization sang through the verses of Khawaja Ghulam Farid. To this day, *qawwals* in *dargah* sing his most loved verse, *'Meda ishq vi tu Meda yaar vi tu'* (You are my love, You are my lover).

In the tumultuous times that we live in, knowledge of such selfless, all-encompassing love of the Divine can bring solace to humanity.



AFFAN YESVI
is Editor in Chief of
Rhyvers Beat Magazine.

Spring in Regent's Park, London

*I sit under the nascent spring sun
under one of your trees
its family of branches and leaves
spread around me and with the lightness
of a hermit soul I begin to write.*

*The sun dapples through the
canopy of new leaves
and in full view beyond
till the clouds arrive to give it some rest.*

*The sculptures stationed within you
from artists all around the world
make comments, about the world;
and pose questions, yet, in your space
all questions cease.*

*As I walk, I watch how dewdrops edge
crisp leaves on your grass like earrings on earlobes,
and each day I take you back with me
on the earlobes of my soul
the earrings of your spring beauty that I place
on my bedside table each night
to wear them again as morning comes.*



PRIYA VIRMANI

is an Author, an International and TEDx Speaker, the CEO of the mindful luxury travel company Ameluxe and the founder of the children's charity Paint Our World. Her book *The Smallest Stories to Extraordinary* is a manual of inspiration for trying times.

A Japanese Spring

*I dream Of elegant, weeping cherry trees –
their fugacious ‘Sagura’ flowers,
and hear them lament their ephemeral life.*

Light airy poetry of joy and melancholy

*A gentle breeze, Rising mists
Rare shades of cherry blossom
with something of the mountains
through a wistful haze.*

*Quiet, enchanting groves whose
beauty won’t last forever.*

*

Delicate maidens – soft breasts – warm hearts

*kimonoed, Slender necks, twinkle toes
fragile. Pale tea Pure Saké*

*A quickening of the heart
and a peaceful silence of the soul
I’ll go ‘Hanami’ this spring and enjoy
the transient beauty of flowers.*



**CDR AMRAO JUNG
BAHADUR SINGH
(Retd.)**

lives in Mohali and is
presently promoting
international
defence and security
exhibitions.

Chitkabra

The little girl stood at the balcony of her new house on the second floor and gazed down at the street and the house on the other side. The strip of lawn bordering the house had a bush and as her gaze fell on it, she detected movement. Two intense eyes looked at her unflinchingly. She gasped as the owner of the eyes emerged out of the bushes and looked up at her. Her fear gave way to bubbly laughter as the little black and white spotted puppy gave a small bark. The way it sniffed in the air and gave a defiant and mutinous look seemed to convey that it was trying to assert authority.

“Mom, I am going downstairs.”

“Ok Misha, but don’t go too far and be careful.”

She raced down the stairs and approached the small puppy. A pitch-black yet graceful looking bitch appeared out of the blue and even though, it looked calm, 10-year old Misha could perceive the waves of wariness from the bigger dog. Suddenly, the metal door of the house opposite to hers opened and a cantankerous old man emerged shouting and wielding a stick,

“Tu fir aa gayi Kaali aur apne iss Chitkabre pille nu vi le aayi! Ruk teri ajj khair neyi!” (You have come again you black dog and have brought this spotted puppy of yours along with you. Wait, I will not spare you today).

While the black dog sauntered away with an air of disdain, the small puppy stood its ground and barked as though demanding why it was being driven away. The old man came hobbling with a snarling expression and fully intended to hit the small puppy but then the tiny creature didn’t budge.

Misha leaped in front of the dog and the old man stopped. An expletive escaped his lips that made tears spring up in Misha’s eyes.

She looked into the innocent eyes of the small, proud pup and wondered why human beings talked about egalitarianism when they were not ready to let mute, hapless creatures like “Chitkabra” exist peacefully.

A few days later as Misha sat reading in the balcony, she heard the old man shouting again. She stood up and saw two boys on a motorcycle snatching a wad of notes from the old man and push him hard. Suddenly, a small tornado seemed to spin out of the bushes. She saw Chitkabra almost flying in the air and biting the hand of the miscreant who held the wad of notes. The boy screamed in pain and flung out his arm reflexively so that all the money scattered across the street. Chitkabra also went flying and landed on the road as an oncoming scooter hit him. Blood pounded in Misha’s ears as she saw Chitkabra’s small body trembling

unnaturally. Blood pooled around the small body. The miscreants vanished into thin air but the old man got up and with a heart-rending howl gathered up the small, broken body of his saviour and rushed out of the lane.

A week later, Misha heard a knock on the door. The old man stood at the threshold and in his arms was Chitkabra, wrapped in bandages with the same fierce yet adorable look in his eyes.

The old man smiled at her and said, “I am an old man, child, but I have realised that Chitkabra is my real son. Unlike my sons, he hasn’t abandoned me. Will you help me raise him?”



DEEPIKA BANERJEE hails from Chandigarh and is an IELTS trainer, a freelance writer and subeditor for an Australia-based news magazine



A Soldier's Spring

*I till with my sweat
Renew with my blood
This garden of peace
Has blossoms rare
Camaraderie keeps the roots firm
With rows of tubers spaced diligently
The flower beds marked with barbed wire
Tulips of brotherhood and duty flourish
T'was a garden of perseverance of this man in uniform
Sometimes remains and ashes embellish
Memorial weddings that usher saline*

*Nascent buds wither as streams of sacrifice overflow
Whispering epistles of patriots, the gale
The cuckoo sings, as the green invades
This olive green kneels in warm adieu
To the last man standing- a vision so true*

*No season, no reason the sign says
You stand true to the hues that you swore to
The bugle narrates each gardens' tale
With notes of farewell and honour entailed.*



**NAVNEET GILL
GREWAL**

is a freelance writer
and content creator
from Chandigarh

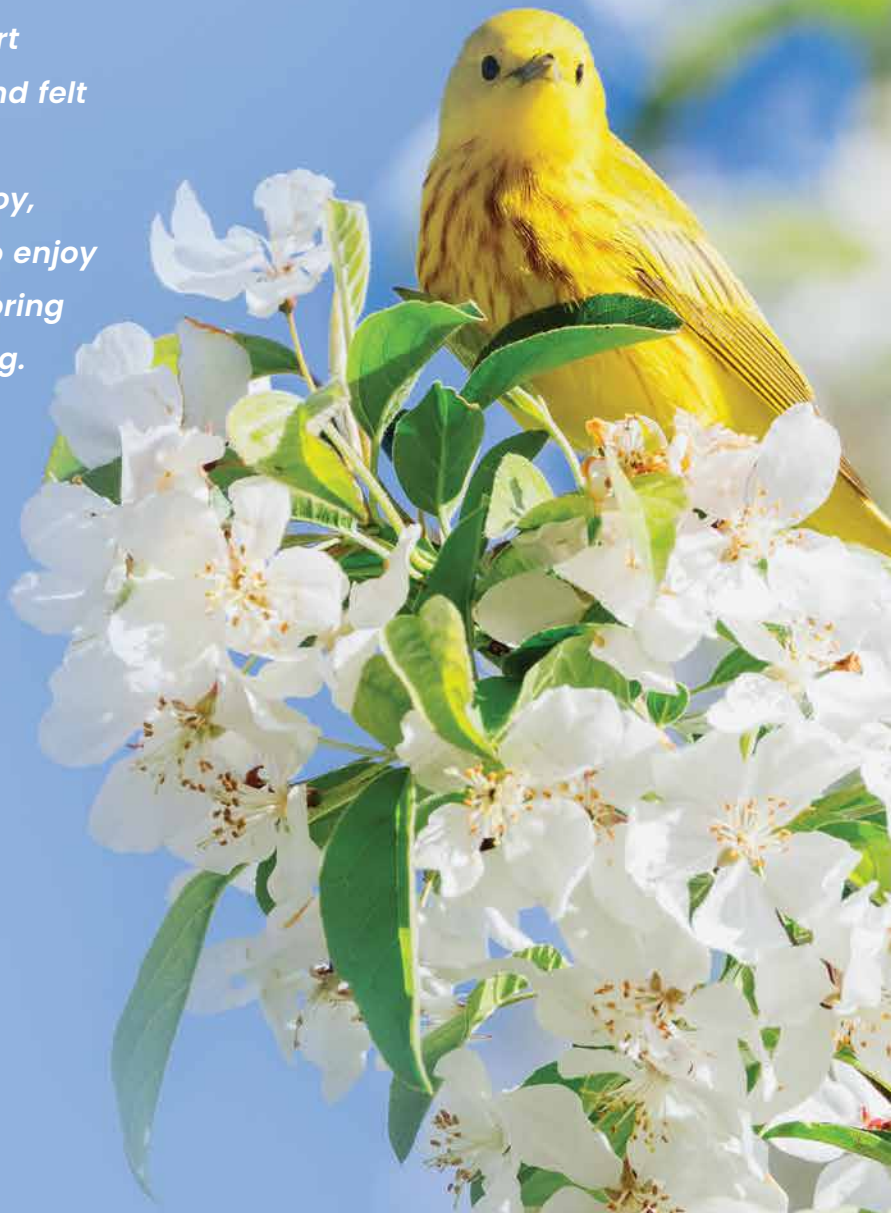
Spring with a change

*Northeasterlies are blowing hard
the dawn is approaching early,
New seasons are emerging with
a little change, merely.
Ferns are becoming greener and
the roses are full of buds
Blissful memories are catching my mind-
of all the people I loved.
Winter has come to an end,
So has the cold grief of heart
Which I have often expressed and felt
through my blissful art.
Spring marks never ending joy,
With upcoming serenity in life, to enjoy
The time of zest begins with spring
and will last till the birds sing.*



AABHYA BAHREE

is a student of
Class XI in GNPS,
Chandigarh



Spring is Not a Season

*The storm in me raged with full force,
The thunder clapped loudly in me,
overshadowing my beating heart.
The speed of my thoughts left me
befuddled and nervous.*

*The lightening sent jitters down my spine,
as though I was being zapped by a bolt itself;
The tunnel I was in seemed endless and
my thoughts vortexed into an abyss.
The light at the end of the tunnel seemed
farther away with each passing step.*

*I was about to let go of my reins but he stopped me;
He cleared the thunderous clouds all around me
And planted flowers in my barren soul.
He fed me perennial waters to quench my thirst.*

*The rays of the warm sun melted
my frosted blood, and brought spring in
my wintery, meandered time on earth.*

*Like the new life springing in nature,
he breathed new life into me.*

My spring is not a season, my spring is him.



SAHIRA JAIN

is pursuing law from
NLU, Sonapat, Haryana.
She is a national level
Latin dancer.

The Elixir

“Would you like an ice-cream? Khaben? Khanna.” Mr. Ghosh insisted.

Binodini feared for her tonsils but her heart filled with a strange sensation of tenderness did not allow her to refuse him.

“Accha, if you insist I will have one.”

Mr. Ghosh smiled, his eyes twinkling with happiness and pride for having been able to persuade a reluctant Binodini successfully. Binodini could not help noticing the dimples on his cheeks or the lines on his forehead which appeared more pronounced as he lifted his eyes upwards to speak to her.

Mr. Ghosh purchased two ice-creams, one vanilla flavoured for himself and another mango flavoured for Binodini. In two weeks, he had been able to notice her preferred choice. Binodini was awestruck- “Can a man have an eye for such detail?” she wondered. They walked together, side by side, with ice-cream in one hand and their grandchildren towing along with the other.

Binodini or Binu Masima as she was called in the neighborhood, had lived most part of her life alone. Having been married off early in her life, she had been at the fulcrum of her marital household for the greater part of her life. Her aged, ailing parents-in-law had allowed her to rule the roost almost immediately after she had checked into her new family. However, success in securing a proper station in life did not make her conceited, rather it made her dutiful and selfless.

She perfected the grace of putting everyone else before herself and was unquestionably the greatest asset for the family. She lived a simple, contented life as long as providence was kind to her.

The demise of her parents-in-law, followed by the accident of her husband began to take a toll on her. Her husband being paralyzed waist down was confined to the wheel chair and Binodini was left with the task of raising her son single-

handedly which she did remarkably well as Riju, her son was able to secure a place in IIT in the first attempt. The poor boy had lost his father even before matriculation and his mother was so immersed in the task of raising him that she never really had the time to connect with him beyond catering to his needs. It was no wonder that Binodini was hardly left with any sense of purpose in her life after her son left to etch out a life for himself.

She lived most part of the year in her Kolkata home, shopping, cooking and cleaning, all by herself, all for herself. She generally travelled to visit her son in Bangalore once a year and her son and daughter-in-law looked forward to her visits as little Asha was able to enjoy the company of her grandmother.

“Asha receives the attention and affection that she needs the most. That is the only way of curing her reticence.” The working parents agreed readily- a happy departure from their constant frictions.

It was during one such brief stay that Binodini chanced upon Mr. Ghosh who also visited his son annually. They were two lonely souls brought together by circumstances in the winter of their lives and every moment they spent together ushered in hope and hinted at possibilities. Life no longer felt like the sterile winter, rather it was like the spring season full of promises of new beginnings.



SARBANI CHAKRAVARTI

is a trained teacher with international teaching experience and is currently working as a senior teacher in a reputed private school in Kolkata.

My Dining Table!

*My zen place to rekindle my senses
Sitting through the morning coffee in recess
It's the time to watch the onset of spring
The glory of life's best times, it does bring.*

*People call it a dining table
I call it a place for conversation
As a mom, daughter, and friend
When I sit there to talk, it never ends*

*There are times, I sit there silently
Watching the windowpane bashing violently
Just like life's tides that come and go
My table, remains constant to let me bow*

*I sit there, eating my meal in peace
It takes the burden of my life till the lees
Sometimes, it bears the tears I shed
And shares with me the fears I dread*

*People call it a dining table
It shares all thoughts that enable.
For me, it's the best place in my house
Where my mornings take a rouse.*



UMASREE RAGHUNATH
is a Senior IT Director,
Author, Blogger, Poet,
Lawyer, Social Activist,
from Chennai.



Spring beckons no more...

*For centuries,
Trees bestowed shade, fruit and oxygen,
Greenery gave soothing and fresh sight,
Flowers provided beauty and fragrance,
Lakes offered cool and pleasing effect!*

*Sky scrapers have now replaced trees,
Heaps of garbage replaced greenery,
Stinking choked open drains took over flowers,
Jungle of concrete engulfed lakes and diggies!*

*Mankind is running after material things,
No one seems bothered about nature anymore,
Everyone is busy in his/her own affairs,
No one bothers if Spring beckons!*

*May Almighty make human beings—
Capable of appreciating SPRING,
Capable of beholding greenery,
Capable of enjoying beauty of flowers,
Capable of feeling serenity of lakes
Capable of being Human!*



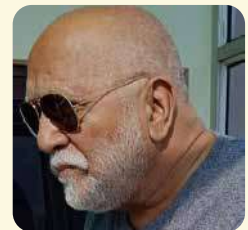
**DR. VINAY KUMAR
MALHOTRA**

is former Principal, M N
College, Shahbad and
is an author. He lives in
Ambala Cantt.

Amaltas *in Spring*

Amaltas loaded with yellow flowers,
Is an eyecatcher in spring,
As if nature has become a sprinkler of youth,
Trees appear like canopies of yellow flowers.
Amaltas, a fully blossomed maiden
adorned in a yellow outfit,
her yellow dupatta slithering
down her shoulders.
The hanging yellow branches-
the maiden's earrings,
And its perfume is the fragrance of her body.
Adding to the trance
is the koel's 'koo..koo..' from the tree,
The scene gets charged with awe,
love and inspiration (Vismad),
In the stupor one tends to
lose oneself for the time being,
As if time has stopped
to witness this yellow ecstasy.
Alas! the sensuous pleasure
stays for ever but,
like beloved's embraces for few days,
it ends and one is left with the memory
of dry and rusty hanging beans,
And the scenario repeats itself
with every spring turning to autumn.*

* *Fistula Cassia*



**COL KULDIP
DOSANJH DOSANJH
(RETD)**

lives in Jalandhar. Post retirement he served as Principal, Army Public school Amritsar and Kapurthala. He has authored 10 books both in Punjabi and English.

Spring

*A tiny seedling planted with pleasure
In the hope of accomplishment
Of dreams worth a treasure.
The continuous efforts of irrigation
Accompanied by the blessed rays
Of the Lord of Nation
Brought light into the life
Of the girl who planted
The liberty for life.*

*She aimed to end the synthetic struggle
For all the queens to rule
The realm of populace
And cease from being feeble.
The seed started to grow
And the freedom tinted
The vibrant forest of hope
With its rainbowed row.*



VRINDA
is a student of GGSDS
College Chandigarh
and is pursuing Honours
in English.

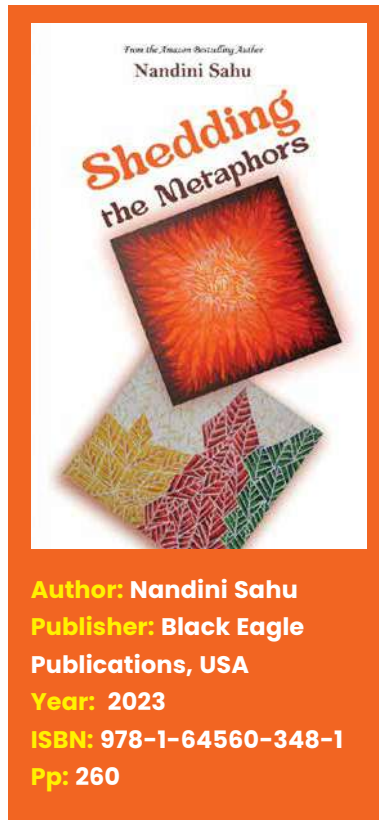


Shedding The Metaphors

With the publication of *Shedding the Metaphors* (a collection of twelve stories), poet, folklorist, Professor Nandini Sahu ventures into a new genre in a big way. Having published many stories in journals, magazines and edited books across the globe, this is Nandini's first story collection and eighteenth book in English.

Nandini's stories are multi-layered—and they have the capacity of taking the reader to a cerebral encounter like never before. To quote the author herself from the Preface, “For me, *the personal is political*. My quarrel with the self and otherwise is rather a reassembling and uniting war cry, a clarion call, like that of the slogan of students' movement during the second-wave feminism of late 1960s. I write social mobility literature, I do that with clear intentions. Like Mahasweta Devi, writing is my personal agenda, and it is my political agenda too!”

‘Being God's Wife’ is Nandini's memoir, that gives the reader details of her humble upbringing. ‘A Very Different Story’ is a heartrending love story, taking the reader deeply into the romantic imagination of the writer. ‘The Wild Stream’ has a different mood altogether— it talks about the political agendas of a political party and its influence on the life of the protagonist. ‘That Elusive Orgasm’ talks of the hypocrisy of the society to boost incest. ‘The Quarantined’ and ‘Post-Quarantine’ are psychoanalytical accounts of human behaviour. Thus, all the stories in the collection are issue-based, giving the reader some food for thought. Also, the stories are aesthetically and linguistically rich.



Author: Nandini Sahu

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Conventionally, there may be four types or levels of meaning of narratives: literal or historical meaning, moral meaning, allegorical meaning, and analogical meaning. The four levels of meaning are affirmed in *Shedding the Metaphors*, if deliberated from the point of view of a complex reader. I am keen to make an interpretation of *Shedding the Metaphors* as a slice-of-life text keeping in view almost all of these theoretical tools. Nandini is the symbol of the archetypal Indian woman, a character culturalized, thus she is comfortable in presenting her characters as Indian culture representations. She doesn't create a role model generated by a patriarchal society to

showcase how they want their women to be—pure, law abiding, beholder of their honour, embodiment of beauty and sacrifice. Her female characters are free spirited; they are flesh and blood women. And her male characters are real, genuine, with human strengths and weaknesses. They are the here-and-now-men to linger in the reader's memory even long after reading the stories.

All the twelve stories of this collection have been translated in Hindi by Dinesh K Mali and have been published from Canada, and the Hindi book is under publication under the title, *Nandini Sahu ki Chuninda Kahaniyan*.



PROF. SUJIT KUMAR PRUSETH

is Professor, IIM, Sambalpur, as well as a writer and regular columnist of Odia and English Newspapers.



Her Arriving !

*The snow is melting
A gentle wind is replacing snowy winds
Sun is leaving Capricorn to enter Cancer
Surroundings are becoming fresher
Seems like she is arriving !*

*Her arrival makes the brown leaves turn into green
She asks the dry grass to change its uniform
and wear a sweet-smelling, lush, verdant robe.*

*Her arrival awakens insects and birds
From the slumber
and come out of their abode
in the fresh, lush and green fields.*

*Her arrival makes the sky blue and clear
With no patches of clouds
The sun shines brighter than ever
Encasing the nature with golden shimmering rays*

*Her arrival fills the air with purity and serenity
She spreads happiness and joy everywhere
She's a new start...
She is called Spring!*

ANANYA PANDEY

is a student of class 11 (Humanities)
of Bhavan Vidyalaya, Panchkula



Spring Renaissance

*Blossoms open up their bloom skirts,
Petals digging into shades spectacular;
Iridescent feathers of the avian kind,
soar stretched to skies unlimited,
Greens do drenched twiggle on precarious branches;
Bestial lives, too, spruce up their acts,
shaking plumages, curling up tails,
dancing to primordial tunes of hormone hikes;
Why is it that the homo sapiens alone agitate?
in the spring of their lives?
Are we done? The eternal query arises;
Labour, Love, lost in the rigours of life,
Let's enjoy the spring of life,
Worries unperturbed, desires quenched, ardours doused,
Welcoming the winter years ahead,
Doing a joyful gig when senses can revel
Where shared hours are not mute silences,
SPRING is the Renaissance of Spirit,
A touch of colour-splash to our Horizons!!!*



**SUREKHA
SRINIVASAN**

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

Portmanteau

*The grass in my garden,
And the river that runs behind,
The outmoded deckchair,
And the dust that hides there,
The sunlight that filters through,
The leaves that once the winds blew,
These are the pieces I'd carry,
In my portmanteau.
My trunk would have fragments,
Of the cloth that once swaddled,
The single year old,
Who wanted the moon, not the model.
The squeaking of the trampoline springs,
The laughter that came from the swings,
These are all that I'd carry,
If I visited home the last time in spring.
My portmanteau wouldn't be what a typical
one looked like,
It wouldn't be a collection of things alike,
There would be echoic memories and
moments so bright,
'Cause that's how my picks from a last visit
home would be made right.*



ASNA NAUF

is a budding poet from Sydney, New South Wales. She is currently pursuing Bachelor of Business at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

Spring of Life

*Spring, the season for the human soul to revivify,
A lovely reminder to be joyous,
To bloom leaving the winter of life far behind.*

*We cannot stop the fall and spring from coming,
But what to endow to each season,
We can opt, We can decide.*

*Life is undeniably a whirl of wavering,
Amalgamation of high and low tides.*

*Live the life in love,
The storms shall pass,
The spring will come,
Spring and fall both are awakening times.*

*Plant your garden,
Smell those beautiful flowers,
Open the window of mind,
Always recognize,
After the harsh winter season,
There is infallibly spring of life.*



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



बसंती फूल

चारों तरफ पीले, नहीं बसंती रंग के फूल खिले हुए हैं। पंजाब यूनिवर्सिटी में हमारे विभाग के बाहर "ट्रंपट फ्लावर यानि तुरही के फूल" अपनी बसंती आभा के साथ प्रकृति का सौंदर्य बढ़ा रहे हैं। बसंत का मौसम आते ही, प्रकृति खुद ही खिल जाती है। गुलाबी ठंडक लिए हुए मौसम, फूलों की बहार, मानो प्रकृति ही प्रेम गीत गुनगुनाने लगती है।

विभाग से बाहर निकलकर मैं इन फूलों को निहार रही थी। इन फूलों के साथ मेरी बहुत-सी यादें जुड़ी हुई हैं। यह बसंती फूल मुझे मेरे पहले प्यार की महक ताजा करवाते हैं।

याद है मुझे, हमारे एम. ए. के थर्ड सेमेस्टर की परीक्षा चल रही थी। मैं और भावना परीक्षा देकर विभाग से बाहर आ रहे थे तभी पीछे से किसी ने आवाज़ दी।

"सुमि रुको!" मुझे विभाग में सब सुमि के नाम से पुकारते थे।

यह तो शरद की आवाज़ है।

"अरे रुको, तुमसे कुछ बात करनी है!" शरद ने मुझे रोकते हुए बोला।

"मैं चलती हूँ सुमि, तुम रुको। मुझे घर में कुछ काम है।" भावना ने चलते हुए मुझे बोला।

शरद मेरा हाथ पकड़ कर मुझको लगभग घसीटते हुए बोला, "अरे चलो,

बाहर देखो मौसम कितना अच्छा है।"

शरद मेरे से एक कक्षा सीनियर था। वह पी.एच. डी. कर रहा था। बड़ी-बड़ी आँखें, लम्बा कद, सांवला रंग और बहुत ही आकर्षक! शरद से मेरी दोस्ती पहले

दिन ही हो गई थी, जब वह अपने दोस्तों के साथ हमारी इंट्रो ले रहा था। सीनियर जो था, मैं तो उसका व्यक्तित्व देखते ही रह गई थी।

"अरे आप आइए, यह लंबे बालों वाली मैडम, अपना नाम बताइए!" बड़ी दमदार आवाज़ में उसने मुझे आगे आने को बोला।

"सिमरन" मैंने बोला।

"हम तो सुमि ही बोलेंगे, सिमरन बोरिंग है।

"एक्टिंग करोगी या गाना गाओगी! चलो तुम गाना ही सुना दो।"

"मैं अलबेली, घूमूँ अकेली कोई पहेली हूँ मैं!..."

"आगे भी सुनाओ मैडम, नहीं सुमि जी!"

"चलो कोई बात नहीं, इतना ही काफी है!" शरद ने मेरा बचाव कर दिया।

उसके बाद शरद से दोस्ती हो गई। शरद हर काम बहुत धैर्य से करता था, मुझे हर समय जल्दी लगी रहती थी। आज भी मेरा स्वभाव वैसा ही है।

हम अक्सर लाइब्रेरी में, कैटीन में और नोटस लेने के बहाने मिलते रहते थे। शरद बहुत ही शांत और सौम्य स्वभाव का व्यक्ति था।

"क्या सोच रही हो सुमि?" शरद के बोलने से दो साल पुरानी यादों से वापस आई।

"कुछ नहीं, ऐसे ही! जल्दी बताओ क्या कहना है!" मैंने बोला सामने से कक्षा के अन्य विद्यार्थी आ रहे थे, देखते ही शरद बोला, "चलो कहीं और चलते हैं।"

हम अपनी पसंदीदा जगह सुखना लेक पर पहुंच गए।

"जल्दी बताओ शरद, क्या कहना चाहते हो?"

"अरे सब रखो बताता हूँ।" अपने चिर परिचित बेपरवाह अंदाज में शरद ने बोला।

"सुमि तुम एम. ए. के बाद क्या करोगी?"

शरद ने पूछा

"अभी कुछ सोचा ही नहीं!" मैंने जवाब दिया।

"मेरी जीवनसंगिनी बनोगी?" बिना किसी भूमिका के शरद ने प्रश्न किया।

मैं तो हतप्रभ, ऐसे किसी प्रश्न की उम्मीद नहीं थी। क्या बोलूँ? मेरे तो घर वालों को भी शरद के बारे में कुछ पता नहीं था।

"सोच-समझ कर जवाब देना, मैं तुम्हारे उत्तर की प्रतीक्षा करूँगा।" शायद शरद ने मेरे चेहरे से

अनुमान लगा लिया था।

उसके बाद मैं शरद से मिलने में कतराने लगी। ऐसा नहीं कि शरद मुझे पसंद नहीं थे, परंतु मैं नहीं चाहती थी कि विभाग में कोई हमारे बारे में बात करें।

मैंने एम.फिल.में दाखिला ले लिया और अपनी पढ़ाई पर कंसंट्रेट किया।

उसके बाद पी.एच.डी में दाखिला और विभाग में ही मुझे नौकरी मिल गई। शरद ने इस दौरान बड़ी शिद्दत से मेरी मदद की और मुझे समझा। शरद ने मेरा इंतजार किया और आज हम पति-पत्नी हैं।

मैं यूनिवर्सिटी में अपने विभाग में ही प्रोफेसर हूँ परंतु बसंत के मौसम में इन फूलों को खिलते देख मुझे अनायास ही वह खुशनुमा पल याद आ जाते हैं, जो मेरे प्यार के साक्षी हैं।



रेखा मित्तल चंडीगढ़ में रहती हैं। इनका काव्य संग्रह "दूज का चांद" हाल ही में प्रकाशित हुआ है।



कोहरे का फरेब

फ़रवरी के जिस्म पर कोहरे का फरेब चढ़ता है
इंतज़ार के बाद कहीं जा कर बसंत गढ़ता है

डालियों पर रुआब इश्क का बढ़ने लगा
गुलाबी, तो कहीं लाल गुलाब खिलता है

हुस्न सड़कों पर यूँ हो रहा निर्वासित
प्यार का ख्वाब रूप सँवार बिछता है

गुलज़ार है जुल्फ तेरे नाम की कोपल से
भीगता है मन जो तू गोसु झटकता है

पुराने बसंत की कतरनें महका जाती हैं
किताब से इक सूखा गुलाब निकलता है

रात का जिस्म भोर की कली लिए
खिड़की पर रखी खुशबू बयार करता है

बहार का मोह छूटे नहीं छूटता, 'ठहर जाओ'
खिजां से इस इलतिजा को हाथ पकड़ता है ।



शैली विज चंडीगढ़ के एक विद्यालय में हिन्दी विभाग की प्रमुख हैं। चंडीगढ़ में ऑल इंडिया रेडियो में गत 20 वर्षों से अपनी लिखी पटकथाओं को प्रस्तुत करती आ रहीं हैं। शैली की 4 पुस्तकें प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं एवं इनकी कविताएँ कई साँझा संग्रह में भी प्रकाशित हुई हैं।



बसन्त

पीले पत्ते, पीली अमरलता पीली सरसों
मदमाती उम्र में बसन्त ही बसन्त छाया है
मुझे पीले चेहरों की ललक ही दर्शाती है लोग कहते हैं
नवयौवन के उन्माद में वसन्त आया है ...

मुझे भूख बेकारी पीड़ा से चेहरे ज़र्द नज़र आते हैं
रेल पटरियाँ खोजता कोई घर से भागा है मंदिर मंदिर मुस्काते प्रेम में विह्वल,
लोग कहते हैं उम्र का तकाज़ा है,
झर झर झरते पत्तों ने जुल्म ढाया है...

हवा की हिमानी गर्द में, धरती पे पले बड़े निरीह से,
कब खोली आँख सुकुमारता ने, कब लुटे पिटे तर्क वितर्कों में जीवन पाया है
लोग कहते हैं लिया इन्होंने जीवन मंदिर पान,
तभी ऋतु की उमंगों का साया है...

सब जीर्ण पुरातन पल्लवित हो उठे हैं
जड़ अवचेतन सब हो चुके हैं ध्वस्त
जारी है पतझड़ की चिड़चिड़ाहट
लोग कहते हैं ओढ़ा दिया पीताम्बर धरा को,
वसन्त ने गुलाल बिखराया है...



निर्मल जसवाल

(राणा) कनाडा/
चंडीगढ़ से कवयित्री एवं
लेखिका हैं। इन्होंने 16
किताबें प्रकाशित की
हैं। हाल ही में इनका
उपन्यास 'रेड वाइन
ज़िन्दगी' प्रकाशित
हुआ है।

तुम संग बसंत

मेरा मन तुम्हारी स्मृति के सुख में डूबा रहता है
तुम्हारे ना आने पर
ना मिलने पर मन मसोस कर रह जाता है

गीत सुनूँ कोई गीत गाऊँ
कुछ लिखूँ या पढ़ने में मन को रमाऊँ
ऐसा ही कुछ हर शाम सवाल करती
हूँ खुद से, उलझन सुलझती नहीं
याद जाती नहीं, तुम आते नहीं

तुमसे कही गई बातें
सोते जागते गूँजती रहती हैं
मैं दूर बैठी सुनती रहती हूँ
कभी कोयल कूक सुनाती है
कभी पपीहा पिहु पिहु अलापता है
बसंत के आने की आहट हवा में
झूमते पेड़ दे रहे हैं
आंगन में खिले फूल
धूप का स्वाद बता रहे हैं

और धूप खिलखिलाकर हँस हँस
कर बतिया रही है
बसंत फिर देहरी पर खड़ी
मेरा जी जला रही है
फूलों में रंगों की बहार है
मेरे मन का मौसम लेकिन पतझड़ है

मैं हर बार की तरह
फिर पूछ रही हूँ तुमसे
तुम कब आओगे प्रिय
मैं गुज़रे वक़्त में ठहर गई हूँ
वही दिन, वही रात,
वही पुराने ख़्वाब चाहती हूँ
तुम संग बसंत चाहती हूँ...



श्रीमा गुप्ता चंडीगढ़ से
कवि, मंच संचालक
एवं समाज सेविका
हैं। कविता संग्रह-
नीलपाखी, चाँदी की
डिब्बी।



A woman, Srekala Bharath, is the central figure in the image. She is dressed in a vibrant purple and orange saree with gold borders and intricate patterns. She is adorned with traditional Indian jewelry, including a large gold necklace, a matching headpiece (mangotika) with a bindi, and several bangles. Her hands are positioned in a graceful, traditional pose. The background is a rustic stone wall with a stone archway, suggesting an ancient or historical setting. The lighting is warm and directional, highlighting the textures of her clothing and the stone wall.

*“There is
no shortcut
to success”*

*In this world of instant gratification, **Srekala Bharath** talks about her five decades of devotion to the dance form of Bharatnatyam, an art which is her constant source of energy and is nothing short of a passion. From the Bharatnatyam capital of India, Chennai, our Executive Editor, **Dr. Sonika Sethi**, brings to the readers an exclusive and candid interview with the danseuse par excellence.*

SS: *Tell us about your journey with Bharatnatyam. How did it begin and who all influenced you?*

SB: My journey with Bharatnatyam started way back when I was seven and a half years old, around the year 1969. Like every Brahmin family in those days, my parents too, wanted their children to learn at least one art form. So my parents decided to send me to the Bharatnatyam Guru, K J Sarasa, who lived two streets away from our house. Since it was walking distance, they could easily drop and pick me up. That's how it all started. I started learning Bharatnatyam from her in February 1969. In 1971, I had my *Salangai Puja*, in 1972 I had my *Arangetram* (debut stage performance) and since then there has been no looking back. I was with my illustrious Guru from 1969 to 1999. That is how I remember my journey.

SS: *How do you look at your relationship with your Guru K. J. Sarasa?*

SB: In those days, giving performances was different from these days. While I was a student, there were not many *sabhas* where you could give your performances and very few organisers. By 1986, when I was 25 years old, I had risen to fame and my teacher would recommend my name to the organizers and would make sure to teach me every item of my performance. She would herself choreograph the entire performance, teach me and then



By 1986, when I was 25 years old, I had risen to fame and my teacher would recommend my name to the organizers and would make sure to teach me every item of my performance. She would herself choreograph the entire performance, teach me and then would ask me to go and teach other students. That way I became her prima donna disciple.



would ask me to go and teach other students. That way I became her prima donna disciple.

SS: *Do you find any significant change in the Guru-Shishya parampara these days, which was considered an essential for learning?*

SB: Well, these days, students don't stick with one teacher. They keep hopping from one



Students who wish to learn will stay with you, no matter what, Hug these students. Those who do not understand that what you say is for their own good, let them go. Don't stop them, Kala. They'll go around like a boomerang and will come back to you.

teacher to another and ultimately don't land anywhere. I started my dance school, Thejas in 1999, I hardly knew how I would react to my students. But in two years, I realized that I had a latent anger in me that I reserved only for my students though for their own good. I recalled what my teacher had once told me about students. She said, "Students who wish to learn will stay with you, no matter what, Hug these students. Those who do not understand that what you say is for their own good, let them go. Don't stop them, Kala. They'll go around like a boomerang and will come back to you." Also, in those days, if a teacher said, you have to be there at 7 for rehearsals, I was never late and she would also be ready, never delaying any rehearsal or program.


SS: *What kind of support did you get from your family?*

SB: My parents, Indira and C. R. Krishnamachari enrolled me at a young age with my guru. I got married when I was only 18 and by the time I was 20, I had my son, Abhishek. My mother-in-law, who was a versatile Carnatic musician,

organized programs for me and also invited people at our home to introduce them to my art.

SS: *What do you consider as your blessings?*

SB: It has been a long journey so far during which I have, with the blessings of my Guru, performed in different parts of the country as well as the world. I have performed in 31 countries so far and have also taken many of my students along with me for performance. In 2009, I celebrated 40 years of my dancing and 10 years of my dance school in which distinguished guests related to the field of dance came to bless me. In fact, my elder brother, a renowned cricketer, K. Srikanth welcomed all the guests during the event. In 2019, I celebrated 50 years of my dance journey by launching a coffee table book, Yatra which was released by the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Gopalaswamy. I count all these things as my blessings. Also, the support of my parents, my two brothers and my husband, Bharath Kumar has played a vital role in what I have attained so far.



I have been lucky to have performed in different countries as the cultural ambassador of India and thereby taking Bharatnatyam to far corners of the world. We also do corporate shows and I have choreographed a show for FICCI during the Tsunami. Last year to celebrate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, I choreographed a show to pay tributes to seven freedom fighters from Tamil Nadu. So, the themes and choreography vary according to the requirements. By God's grace I have received 34 awards which motivate me to go on and on.

SS: *Tell us something about your performances. What are the themes you choose for your choreography?*

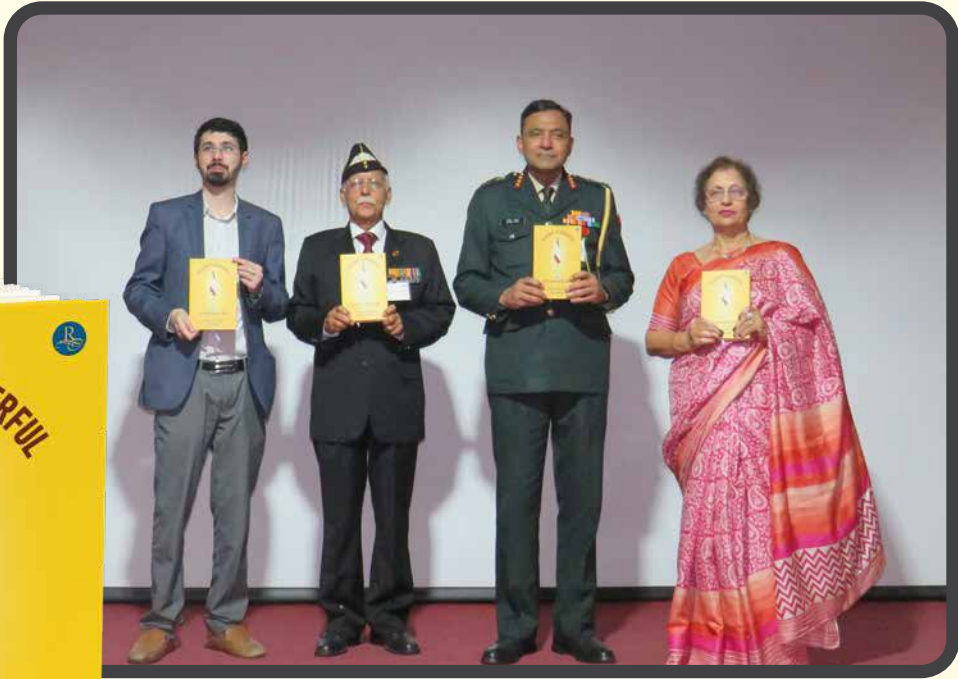
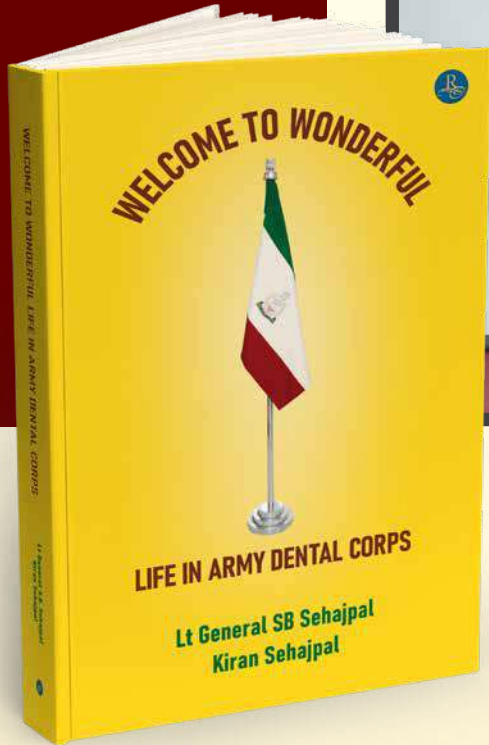
SB: I have been lucky to have performed in different countries as the cultural ambassador of India and thereby taking Bharatnatyam to far corners of the world. We also do corporate shows and I have choreographed a show for FICCI during the Tsunami. Last year to celebrate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, I choreographed a show to pay tributes to seven freedom fighters from Tamil Nadu. So, the themes and choreography vary according to the requirements. By God's grace I have received 34 awards which motivate me to go on and on.

SS: *Where do you see yourself in the coming years? Are there any more targets to achieve?*

SB: With more than five decades into the field of Bharatnatyam, I now look at myself more and more in the role of a Guru. This year, we- my students and I- gave thirteen performances, which is more or less a record in itself. I would love to give more and more exposure to my students, something I'm already known for. I have had a lot of time giving solo performances but now I would like them to take the centre stage just like my Guru supported me, I want to support them. Most of my students are pursuing career oriented courses besides learning Bharatanatyam. They are under lots of pressure to perform professionally and personally. So, I wish to become their support system and give them whatever I can.

SS: *What is your Guru Mantra to your students, something our readers can also relate to?*

SB: See, I am a firm believer of the fact that there is no shortcut to success. Wherever I go, I tell my audience the same thing that I tell my students- always remember 4 Ds- Devotion, Dedication, Determination and the fourth D is your Destiny. If you follow these, you will surely make a name for yourself.



Book launch of

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Authored by

**Lt General SB Sehajpal and Kiran Sehajpal
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