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FROM THE DESK OF GROUP EDITOR

Friendship is a universal treasure. It resonates not only in the bonds we form with people but also in the pages of our favorite books and magazines. Just like the magic of friendship lies in shared moments and memories, books and magazines weave their own enchanting spells through the power of words.

In a world filled with constant change, literature remains a steadfast companion, much like a loyal friend. The legendary author PG Wodehouse once remarked, “There is no surer foundation for a beautiful friendship than a taste in literature.” Indeed, it’s our shared love for the written word that brings us together as readers and writers.

As we turn the pages of a good book or flip through the vibrant content of a magazine, our minds expand, offering fresh perspectives and uncharted territories. It’s in these moments of literary exploration that we discover the essence of true friendship—a bond built on trust, curiosity, and shared experiences.

In this edition of our literary voyage, we delve into the timeless bonds of friendship. Through prose, poetry, and art, we explore the intricate threads that connect souls, celebrating the profound impact of camaraderie on our lives.

From the cherished memories to the unexpected connections, this issue is a heartfelt tribute to the friendships that shape our world. Join us as we embark on a journey through the heartwarming tales of companionship, a reminder that in friendship, we find both solace and inspiration.

Our magazine, like a cherished friend, has evolved over time, adapting to the shifting landscapes of culture and knowledge. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey, where we promise to continue offering you delightful worlds to explore and newer adventures to embark upon. Together, let’s strengthen the enduring bond of friendship that literature brings into our lives.

Affan Yesvi

Affan Yesvi





RHYVERS BEAT

Inviting contributions for the next edition of our magazine,
slated to be published in November 2023

Theme

Mystery

Send your original contributions in the form of

Short Story (550 words max)

Essay (750 words max)

Poems (20 lines max)

Flash fiction, Artwork, Photo Essays

Book / Movie Reviews

Graffiti etc

Last date to send entries

16 October, 2023

Please email your contributions to

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Lost and Gained

*The years dropped, dry, ripened leaves
Each bearing the brand of yester years
Pain and joy, tears and laughter
Imprinting each; tales unknown to each other
Swept away in high tide, reveal themselves
As we meet after many long years!
But for the grey touching the hair here and there
The mask of maturity lending a look of gravity
Everything is the same, we found
As we took up the threads from years ago –
The day we parted ways after school.
Both talked at once, in a hurry to make up
The lost years, the distance, the gaps
Laughed and teased, eyes brimmed and flowed
We hugged and kissed and held hands tight
As though never to part again!
The innocence of childhood friendship
Love uninhibited, beyond limits
Untouched by time, space, ego
A bonding too deep to be scarred or severed!*



Dr. D. Maya

is a Professor of English and retired Principal, residing in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. She is a bilingual writer with ten published books to her credit.

Friendship Among Nations

*The world today suffers,
With wars looming amid the pandemic
Let unity be our slogan
Spread love among nations.*

*Beneath the turmoil
We need to hold hands
Stand together on common ground,
Let love flow from the heavens.*

*Let there be no barriers,
No discrimination of any kind
Be our brothers' keepers
Let harmony be in mind.*

*Friendship among nations is what we crave for,
Stand together for peace
Set aside petty differences,
Let the Guiding Light reign.
We are human, it's our soil,
Love, peace, and brotherhood should be our goals.*

*Many nations
Different colour, creed, and sect
We will not divide on their notion,
The reality we should accept.*

*All of us mere guests,
Let's make this world a heaven
Live together harmoniously,
It's the truthful way and the best.*

*Let's decorate it
With faithfulness and loyalty,
No war, no killings, no rape
Let's bring forth peace and humbly sit.*



Elizabeth Esguerra Castillo

is an awarded International Author, Poet, and Visual Artist from the Philippines. She is the Author of - *Seasons of Emotions* and *Inner Reflections of the Muse*. Her works are translated into 18 different languages.



Shahid Abbas

is an award-winning International Writer and Poet from Pakistan and the author of *Words from Nature* published in the USA.

Pilgrim's Soul

*Friendship,
A word proving
Convergence of two minds or many,
Can give birth to the countless
Priceless memories
And let them roll on the floors of life.
Invading the relation
'From blood to blood',
It grows on a spiritual level
Connecting lives through
Perseverance and Reverence.
Billions of hearts in the world,
Billions of souls praying
For at least one sacred companionship
For this life and even for an afterlife.
Friendship-
That one stoppage where pilgrims
From millions of contradictory ideas
Pause their expertise for a while!*



Suchismita Ghoshal
is an author and
bilingual internationally
published poetess.
She hails from West
Bengal.

Bonhomie and Bonding in ‘Sweet Kaaram Coffee’



Women share a common space by virtue of their shared experience in a society that places them at a subordinate position. Even the well-intentioned members in a family fail to believe their daughters, mothers, sisters and wives as capable of holding reins of their own lives. Confined by the expectations of the society, women live just half lives. They live under constant denial of their dreams, desires, passion and individual selves. Germaine Greer in her seminal work, ‘The Female Eunuch’ pleads for women who are divested of their desires, selves, dignity and personhood. Despite the commonality of their lived experience, women seldom feel courageous to unite and find ways to claim their own selves.

The OTT comic drama series, *Sweet Kaaram*

Coffee created by Reshma Ghatala, is an endeavour to present friendship among the three generation of women living under the same roof in an orthodox middleclass family in Chanai. The name plate of the house with the name ‘Rajaratnam’ takes the focal point of the camera at various points in the story reflecting the conventional solo male power in the family. It is the oldest lady, Sundari Chandrasekar who initiates the group consisting of herself, her daughter in law Kaveri and her granddaughter, Nivedhitha and plans to go on an all women trip to Goa without any support from the male folks of the family.

The opening scene has a *deja vu* in the image of ‘mai’, the grandmother in the award-winning novel by Geetanjali Shree, *The Tomb of Sand*.

Sundari called Patti by her granddaughter, seems bored and sick, reclining on the sofa swing facing the window with her son repeatedly coming to enquire about her health and the medicines she is supposed to take. Her replies are invariably nonchalant that push her further and further into the cushion of the seater.

Kaveri' life pivots around her family, cooking, kids and care of the household. Her husband Rajaratnam takes her for granted as a wife who is perfect in her duties and is happy in her present life. At no occasion, he looks disconcerted about what goes on inside her mind. Resultantly, she feels reduced and marginalised at such a treatment. Yet her smiles and activities in the house as an accomplished cook and energetic caretaker successfully camouflage the bits of turmoil seething within her.

Nivi or Nivedhitha, a cricketer had a recent encounter with her long-standing boyfriend Kartik, also a cricketer, over his alignment with the conservative values of his family members.

Nivi learns that he too, like them believes that a woman's place is in home rather than in the playground. She readily gives accent to Patti's plan as that is an opportunity to escape from her current upheaval after their decision of the breakup.

Nivi drives the car and the three set on the journey without properly informing the male members of their plan. Their excitement to be the persons on their own account and be under the





open sky, the moon light and in the company of the glowworms at the lonely spots on the way is well captured in the storyline. It is as if the child in them awakes. They halt at the local festival and mingle with the crowd. Sundari changes to tee shirt and tights, get her cheeks tattooed and asks everyone to separate and enjoy themselves before meeting at the fixed time.

Nivi befriends Dr. Vikram, a free-spirited boy who is on an adventure trip on his bike to Ladakh. Sundari looks for meeting her old days friend Deva, whose identity remains hidden until the drama nears the last episode. On the way to destination, Sundari takes on the driver seat and drives them off the way while the two are sleeping.

The car stops and breaks down on an unknown path amidst the element of curiosity and fear in the story. They are finally able to find shelter in the humble dwelling of a local labourer. The three of them appreciate the simple ways of the family and their sense of hospitality.

A bonding occurs between them and the members of the household irrespective of the class and caste of the hosts indicating the transformative effect of their journey away from the claustrophobia of biases and perceptions. At the subterraneous level, although Kaveri does struggle with her moments of guilt, which Sundari puts aside by making her conscious of the way she has been treated by her own son throughout her life. She encourages her to regain the lost joys and find strength in being independent.

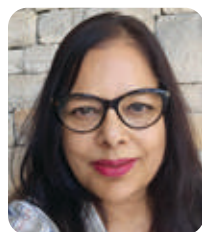
Nivi's conflict and anguish at her breakup is discussed and shared by them all that helps her to gain the clarity of mind. At one point she shares her nightmare with her mother where she finds herself arising out of the image of her docile and acquiescent mother after her marriage with Kartik for whom she still has some feelings of love. The strength she finds in her mother and grandmother who favour her standpoint is noteworthy in the story.

Both Kaveri and Sundari reminisce their past



during this time, a kind of rendezvous with their inner lives significant in their self journey. Kaveri's love for music as a young girl and her affair with a boy who also was a singer are occasionally brought forth. As the drama unfolds, we come to know about Sundari's dead husband who had been dominating and authoritative, her love for her woman friend Deva, who always supported her in the time when she most needed as the mother of two sons, later how she separated from Deva thinking she with her independent mind, was causing problems in her married life. Sundari is now desperate to meet Deva and apologise for her past action, the feelings she has kept submerged inside her for long.

The space outside the house and the physical distance from its routine, has the potentiality to lead her towards the fulfilment of her desire to explore the world and meet her long-lost friend. She shares with her companions including Dr Vikram, who chances upon meeting them again about her relationship with Deva and persuades them to go to Dharamsala. The meeting of the old friends and their recalling the past episodes is done very poignantly. As a



Dr Manjit Kaur
worked as Prof of English for 37 years in Chandigarh. She is currently Prof RBU Punjab.

sad turn of event, Deva refuses to see her again in future as she knows Sundari is bound with her family whereas she in accordance with her resolve has always wanted to live single in her own terms.

The ladies decide to set for the return journey as Nivi has to participate in the next match and cannot miss the selection process The episode ends when they are nearing home and on the way halt at a spa. Rajaratnam, by this time seems to have realised the

true value of his wife as a person and is regretful of how he ignored her. While they are on the spa, Kaveri has a dream cum fantasy, where she finds herself asserting her sexuality back home with her husband and even getting pregnant reminding the viewers of Nina Gupta situation marked by absurdity, in the movie 'Badhai ho'. Both Sundari and Nivi are seen caught up in dilemma. Deva and Vikram reach their home to claim their love, former with Sundari and latter with Nivi.

That One Friend!

*One friend is enough to confide,
And unburden yourself,
One friend can be your philosopher and guide.*

*One friend is enough for fun and gossip,
To make you feel warm and wonderful,
To make you happy and cheerful.*

*One friend is enough,
For shopping and eating together,
And returning home tired.*

*One friend is enough to make you stronger
When you are ill and depressed,
One friend is enough to fill you with laughter.*

*One friend is enough to share your deepest feelings,
To share everything you can't tell others,
One friend is enough for loving and caring.*

*You don't need a large circle,
One friend is enough to help you
When you are in trouble.*

*One friend is all you need,
In this long journey called life.*



Vasudha Pansare

retired as Head, Department of English,
Bishop Cotton Women's Christian College,
Bangalore. She has published 4 volumes
of poetry- *The Masks and Other Poems*,
Leaves of Autumn and Other Poems,
Eventide and The Leaf and Other Poems.



Literature helps us to see our own experiences differently

SAMINA MISHRA is an award winning writer, documentary film-maker, and a teacher based in New Delhi, with a special interest in media for and about children. Her works use the lens of childhood, identity and education to reflect the experiences of growing up in India.

Her films include- *The Teacher and The World* (2016), *Jagriti Yatra* (2013), *Two Lives* (2007), *The House on Gulmohar Avenue* (2005) and *Stories of Girlhood* (2001). She also runs *The Magic Key Centre for the Arts and Childhood*, a virtual resource centre for children as well as adults working with and for children.

In conversation with our Features Editor Preeti S. Manaktala.

The 'Hum Hindustani' Poetry project podcast launched on this Independence day. What is the idea behind this podcast?

The Hum Hindustani Poetry Podcast is a curated selection of poems written by children. The poems explore the ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity guaranteed to

all citizens by the Constitution of India. They bring the diverse contexts of the children who wrote them, giving us glimpses of their lived experiences. The accompanying commentary and responses by writers, artists and educators present the children's words and voices to build a nuanced understanding. The podcast has emerged from Hum Hindustani, a research project on children and citizenship for TESF India that I did last year, in which I used art and writing exercises along with interviews with small groups of children to examine how children experience and understand the ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. One of the key learnings of the project was that it is critical to include children in our conversations about the world, and that by enabling children

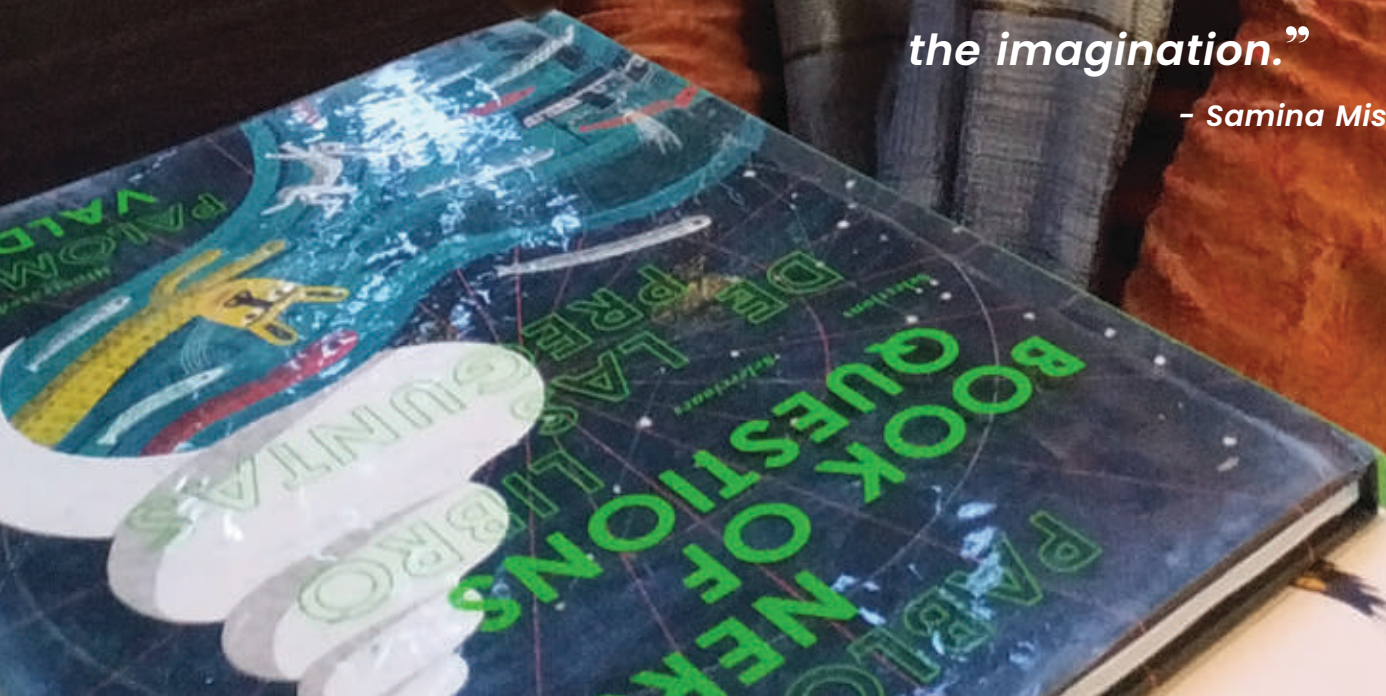


“I think children need stories that open up the wonder of the world for them, stories of fantasy and reality, stories that show them who they are and who they can become, stories that build bridges across the many differences that exist in our lives”

- Samina Mishra

“Every child deserves a chance to dwell in the imagination.”

- Samina Mishra



to tell their stories, we create opportunities to learn from their experiences and support their developing sense of self and of the world.

You have been writing heart-warming children's stories. "Nida Finds a Way" was shortlisted for 1st Binod Kanoria Awards for Children's Literature and the award-winning book Jamlo-Walks has a true story to tell. What inspires you to write stories for children?

I think children's literature needs to reflect the world, like all literature. Children are part of the world, and though we place the burden of the future on children, we don't recognize the fact, enough, that they experience, absorb and struggle with challenges in the world just as we adults do. Literature helps us to see our own experiences differently and to make connections with other lives. One of the reasons that I write



for children is because it affects how I am in the world, with children and young people. I think adults need to be supportive allies for children and I try to do just that through my writing. I try to reflect the diverse voices of children so that we expand the space for children in our public life – there is much that adults can learn from them. I also hope that my writing reflects back to children their own inventiveness, resilience and wisdom so that it helps them make better sense of the world.



You led 'The Incredible Child' an exhibition emerging as the art based workshop for Afghan refugee children at the Simurgh Centre, Delhi. How do you feel it has helped children from the refugee communities?

I cannot speak about healing because our interaction was limited and healing for those

who experience such traumatic events requires a deeper and more sustained engagement. But I do think that the process of engaging with art- by seeing, listening, feeling- is one that provides nourishment, even in the most difficult circumstances. And this is what guided our approach to the work with the children at Simurgh Centre. We held a monthly workshop for children in the age group 9-15 years. Each session was designed to include a film screening, discussion and art activity. The films curated for the programme were from different countries and in different styles. The discussion following the film screening was centred around the ideas thrown up by the film, and led to the art exercise in which children were encouraged to reflect on those ideas and express themselves through a variety of mediums- text, drawing, collage. The

exhibition of their work, The Incredible Child, emerged from this process, a process of co-creation between adults and children. I think it reflects the need for play and beauty in all lives.

You run The Magic Key Centre for the Arts and Childhood. Tell us more about it.

The Magic Key Centre for the Arts and Childhood is a virtual space for children as well as adults working with and for children. The Centre works with children, both online and in person, to facilitate their engagement with the arts, creates media for them, and engages with teachers, parents and researchers on issues of childhood, education and the arts. The Centre's vision emphasizes the place of the arts in education to foster children's understanding of their world and





nurture skills to enable a rich and responsible engagement with society. The Centre has collaborated with different institutions such as Katkatha, Puppet Arts Trust, Kitabo Children's Literature Festival and Max Mueller Bhavan, and worked with children from schools as well as in non-formal spaces.

Your documentary film Happiness Class based on the idea of happiness for children was very well accepted. It must have been such an enriching experience seeing happiness through the lens of children. Tell us about the process involved in making such documentaries.

As I said earlier, my work focusses on creating space for children's voices, that have been marginalized for long particularly in mainstream media, so that we can include them in our conversations about the world and develop a more nuanced understanding.

Happiness Class comes from this approach and examines the idea of happiness for children through the Happiness Curriculum that was introduced in the Delhi government schools. It was seen as a pause in the school day that would facilitate the strengthening of children's inner resources to cope with stress. But for children who come from difficult socio-economic circumstances with precarious everydays, can this pause be enough? The film tries to understand this and present this story as more than the binary positions of success and superficiality allow. The film uses a collage of stylistic approaches - the more conventional documentary interview, arts exercises with children to facilitate intimate conversations, animation that acts as visual commentary. I hope together all of this provokes a deeper and more considered engagement with the ideas of childhood and education.

Thanksgiving

*I have seen you friend
Somewhere amidst the crowd of faceless faces
The sparkling eyes and face radiant with the joy of life.*

*You have infused me with dreams and desires;
You have taught me to anchor my ship,
You have taught me to be a martyr,
Savouring every moment of my destruction.*

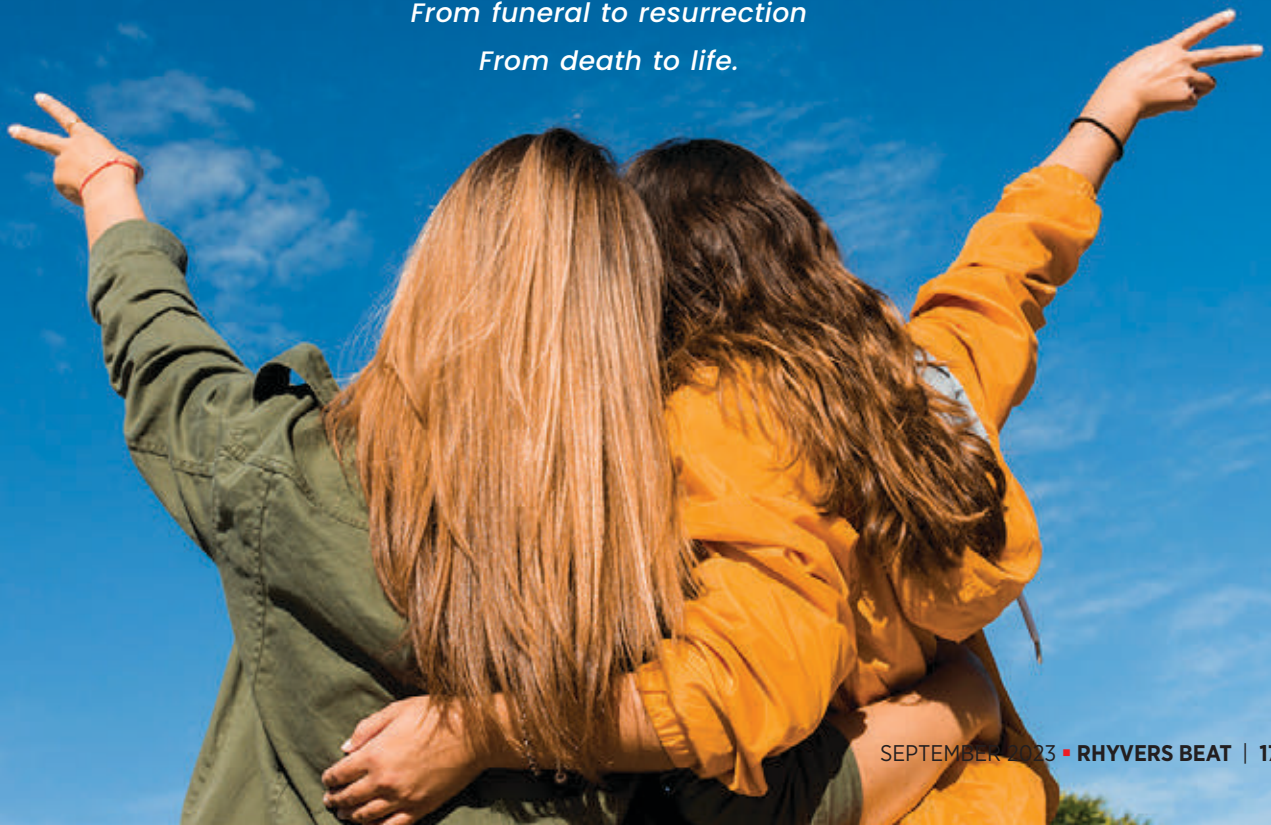
*Like the hackneyed 'Phoenix' did I rise
Form my ashes,
To live for hundred years at least
In tryst with eternity.
Never to be destroyed, never to be forgotten;
In a banquet with life,
A victorious queen by her own rights.*

*I shall be an anchor to them
Those who would dream and desire
To travel from darkness to colour
From autumn to summer
From funeral to resurrection
From death to life.*



Sarbani Chakravarti

is a teacher in a reputed private school in Kolkata. She is an avid reader, a published author, poet and blogger.



Khadi Anyone?

Everyone, I Suppose...

I quickly opened the 1st site that popped in my mind i.e., Khadi Udyog. It is a government run site and now with Make in India reaching the World Platform, I had expectations. To my disappointment I could not find any style which could pique the interest of the Fashionista in me (though they were priced under 2K).

Then started my next search for Khadi (designer's platform) where I saw some Contemporary styles however, they were priced exorbitantly high as they were a part of Bridal Trousseau!

Some wiki facts on why Khadi & India's Fight for Freedom are Soul Sisters...

The 1st piece of the hand-woven cloth was manufactured in the Sabarmati Ashram during 1917-18. The coarseness of the cloth led Gandhi (our dear Babu) to call it Khadi.

Because of the cotton crisis in Britain, India's cotton at cheap prices was sourced to Britain (as India did not have a Textile Industry) and then the same cotton was re-imported to India at exorbitant prices!

This subsequently led to the Swadeshi Movement of boycotting foreign cloth.

Back to today's millennial (Gen Z) era. Where is Khadi now?



Our humble Khaddar was not only one of the themes in Lakme Fashion Week 2019 but also Mega star Kamal Hassan launched his fashion line ‘KH House of Khaddar’ in the Paris Fashion Week in 2022 as a tribute to India’s hand-woven fabric by modernizing Khaddar and also showcased Khaddar denim.

With sustainability as the buzz word and organic products taking world stage, prominent Indian & International designers have joined the Khaddar revolution. One of the leading designers Sabyasachi Mukherjee has been working with Khaddar since 2002 & his Khaddar Bridal lehengas were a major sell out in the designers’ words on Instagram.

My next hunt for Khaddar garments was a phenomenal success and it was street fashion which would cause no distress to our bank balance! Label Maku also promotes Khaddar in its sustainable fashion line.

Designer Karma Sonam of label Kuzu Sikkim showcased their line at the Lakmé Fashion Week 2018.

Khanijo by designer Gaurav Khanijo in collaboration with KVIC showcased Khadi blankets called ‘Khes’.



For Lakmé Fashion week inspired by EK (numero 1) he created a stylish ensemble.

Designers have not only elevated Khaddar to another level but Khaddar is now the front runner on World’s Fashion platforms.

The Versatility of Khaddar is now apparent and I wanted to put together a look of how the ensemble can suit today’s fashion sensibilities. This outfit by Tiasha can be teamed with an organic sustainable CULT GAIA bag and can be elevated with silver neck piece (Flea Market, Goa) and finished with NEEDLEDUST Juttis.

So, Khadi Anyone?



Madhavi Lamba

has a background in finance. Her journey with fashion started over the years with her travel and aesthetic sensibilities. She was a part of Vogue Ambassador for North India and has worked with top designers.

A Twisted Fate...

*In shadows cast by moonlight's pale embrace,
a wolf and rat did meet in sombre space.
One born of fierce blood, a hunter's heart held high,
the other of meek birth, beneath the world's cruel eye.
The wolf, a creature of wild grace and might,
yet burdened by the endless, lonesome night.
Its howl a mournful echo through the trees,
a cry for companionship, carried on the breeze.
The rat, a humble soul of meagre means,
lost in the world of giants and their dreams.
Its lonely heart beat in the dark unknown,
a silent plea for friendship, longing to be owned.*

*Two beings, opposite in strength and size,
yet linked by shared existence's cruel ties.
The wolf, with hunger's fire deep within,
ruthless. The rat helpless, without a fleeting win.
As moonbeams wept upon their tales forlorn,
the wolf's fierce gaze upon the rat was torn.
In eyes that held both sorrow and desire,
two creatures found a bond, a spark of fire.
Yet fate's cruel hand did not relent its grasp.
The wolf, the hunter, trapped within its task!
With teary eyes, it consumed the rat,
a tragic end to their encounter, that was that.
And in the moonlight's gentle, wistful gleam,
a story etched in tears, a haunting theme.
The woods shiver, sigh, and moan,
while the wolf lay once more, again alone*



Veer Rathore

Age: 15



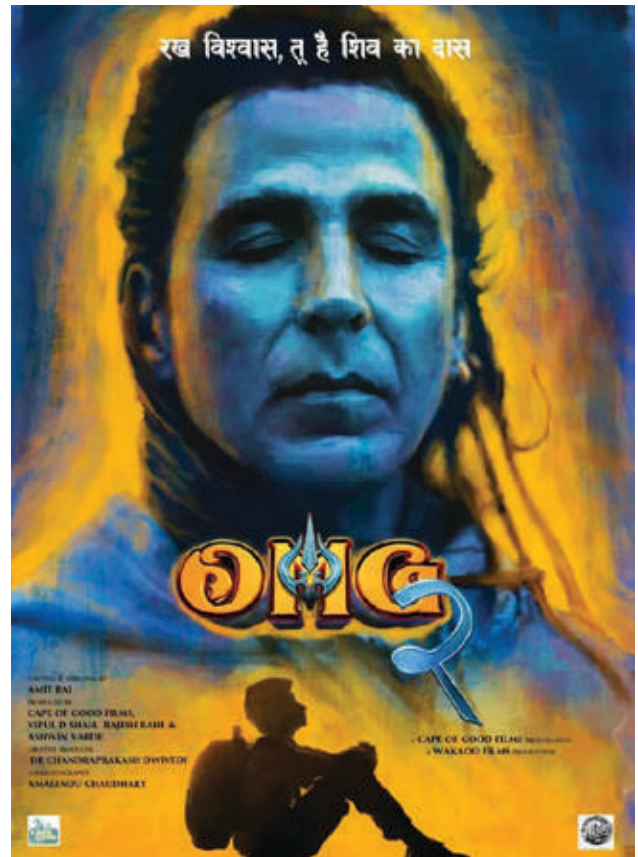
OMG-2

Voice of sanity in the midst of cacophony

It's not often that you come across a movie that's progressive but not preachy; that conveys a deep message without rubbing morals in your face; that bravely talks about not just one, but many relevant social issues, without being vulgar or sleazy. That movie, my friends, is OMG2.

OMG2 is about Kanti Sharan Mudgal, a humble shopkeeper and a staunch devotee of Lord Mahakal. Brilliantly played by Pankaj Tripathi, Kanti lives a happy life with his wife and two children. But then his teenage son gets bullied at school and begins to look for remedies to overcome his so-called 'shortcomings'. With no reliable person to turn to for advice, he gradually goes into depression and his school disowns him on grounds of immoral conduct. His family bears the brunt of being pushed into isolation and disgrace, and the boy even attempts suicide. How Kanti goes about fighting for his son's dignity and proves him innocent, forms the crux of the story.

What works for OMG2 is its very pertinent subject- Sex Education. The importance and the



His family bears the brunt of being pushed into isolation and disgrace, and the boy even attempts suicide. How Kanti goes about fighting for his son's dignity and proves him innocent, forms the crux of the story.




lack of it. The movie openly debates sensitive issues like teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse, good and bad touch, and many others, which happen to be hush-hushed in society.

Teenagers are often confused but seldom turn to their elders for help. Parents and teachers shy away from discussing sensitive matters with them and adolescents turn to the internet



or other unreliable sources for help. *OMG2* questions the secrecy of talking about sex freely, but not once does a single dialogue sound gross or indecent. The entire movie is tastefully made, and as mentioned earlier, there's no long and boring discourse.

The movie also showcases how bullying among teenagers is often overlooked by schools and why students hesitate to report abuse. Most schools are more concerned about their reputation and would rather bury controversies than help students. *OMG2* also touches upon the fact that our ancient literature and scriptures were so very modern and emancipated. There are references to sex education in *Panchatantra* and *Upanishads*.



Preethi Warriar is an Assistant Professor and lives in Mumbai. She is the winner of the TOI Write India Campaign Season-1.

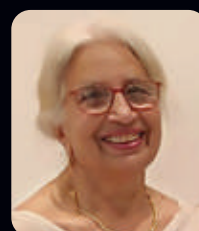
And of course, it's about God and faith. The movie shows that faith gives you the clarity to find answers, the courage to stand up for what's right, and the power to be good to all.

Of the cast, it's Pankaj Tripathi all the way. He carries the movie on his able shoulders and makes Kanti's character extremely relatable, as any average person we meet every day, who would go to any length to save his family. Yami Gautam, as the sharp lawyer Kamini Maheshwari plays her part to perfection. Akshay Kumar has a smaller role, but he lights up the screen with his swag and smile. The supporting cast, Pavan Malhotra, Shreedhar Dubey, and Arun Govil, all play their roles well.

Artwork



This painting was a part of women oriented theme series.



Daljit Kaur

is an artist who has held group and solo exhibitions in Chandigarh.

Gaining a friend

*If you want to gain something, consider gaining a friend,
They make you richer and wiser, and make it all worth in the end.
Your soul knows, your heart tells, whenever you find your type,*

*They mirror your every emotion, even your every silly hype.
Friends are hard to find, you are lucky if you have a few,
They stick with you like a gum, no matter if they are old or new.
They come in all shapes and sizes, with pockets big and small,
But their hearts are pure gold, their souls are always tall.*

*When your going will get tough, and tough wouldn't get going,
Angels dressed up like friends may appear, without you even knowing.
Friends will stand by your side, when the world will turn its back,
They will dust you off and help you stand, may be give you a little whack.*

*Friendships are like rainbows, they make the dark clouds disappear,
The skies shine with hope and cheer, when good friends are near.
Their love will know no boundaries, their friendship is a gift.
They will share all your stupidities, give your spirits the much-needed lift.*

*So, if you want to gain something, consider gaining a friend,
They stay put when your life is perfect and even when it needs a mend.
Life is so much more beautiful, when you have your friends around,
Your sorrows will get divided and your happiness will know no bounds.*



Ruchi Mahajan

A law graduate and corporate secretary by profession, Ruchi quit her corporate job of 20 years to become an entrepreneur and also pursue her passion of writing and music.



Can You gag me forever? Perhaps Not.

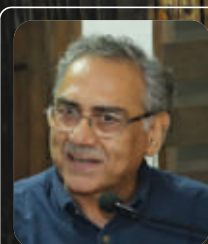
-An Iranian girl's cry for her hanged friends

*You can arrest my speech
And fetter me corporally with your quintessential ruthlessness,
In tight cuffs and nuts and bolts,
You may gag me and cruelly tag me as an outlier,
But not my spirit,
My thoughts and my being, my hopes and my dreams,
Ah, you are too weak and unjust to change or obliterate them,
For they are etched forever on my mind's indelible plate,
I might be dead and gone one day
But I will rust the earth wherein I am interred for final rest,
That earth will heave and flow in front of your jaundiced eyes
almost serpent like,
And my dust will mingle and ride the corrosive wind
To become birds and bees and flowers
and butterflies and fish;
I will haunt at your dining table
and peck your cork head with my beak
And tickle your nose with my flimsy wings
Make a million tries to unsettle you
And stain your soul with guilt,
Probe your inequity with acerbic needles,
even if you remain unmoved
In your shameless bunkers and gem-studded cocoons

Steadfast as a Lucifer and your sinful tribe
With all your torture machines,
How long will it be? How long can it be?
You will fail, you will fail, you will fail, you white turbans
It is your ultimate fate, I know, I know
You cannot rein in my thoughts and my dreams forever,
I know, I know.*

Chandigarh Literary Society
Annual Poetry Competition 2023

1st Prize Winner



Ravindra Tandon joined the Civil Services in 1981 and retired from the Indian Railways as the Principal Chief Operations Manager. Based in Chandigarh he writes poetry, short stories and is an amateur sculptor.

Change

*Change, what a wonderful thing,
Something to make us rethink the features,
Of sinuous breezes in the silent wind,
Or the unacquainted feline slipping away,
Is change really so serene?
Or a raging storm of an inferno?
The comfort of a mother's love,
Or just the shout of an angry friend?
Who knows if this is change,
Or if it is what we hate or adore,
But the harried whispers of the screaming crowds,
Of the ones who carry words as weapons,
Can make us rethink the truth,
The truth of change.*

Chandigarh Literary Society
Annual Poetry Competition 2023

2nd Prize Winner



Prisha Sharma
is a 14-year-old who loves to write, read and paint. Her book titled 'Poems for the Young at Heart' is listed in libraries across India.



The Patchwork Quilt

*You looked for precision and detailing
I longed for creative freedom
You liked linear narration
I loved Bohemian bonhomie
You were a go-getter
I believed in Dolce far niente
So the placid waters of the ocean met the prancing
waves pirouetting in a frenzy
And for a while we rejoiced in this mish-mash of sisterhood
I owned an old bespoke Banarasi silk saree
You, who loved finesse, said, "Wrap it up well-folded
in a closed box."
We let all ruffles and muffles rest quietly within
the creases and folds of the saree
There it lay nestled like the whispering willows
Perhaps it was the Pandora's box
I heard the languished whispers
But you said: "We are preserving it."
Years later, I resisted and took it out
Oh! It started tearing away at the folds
I: "All because of your stubbornness!"
You: "Because of your casualness!"
It died a slow death.
We parted ways until one day
as my patchwork quilt was underway
You barged in crossing the debarred threshold
You: "Let's patch it up together."
I: "But we shall embroider wild blossoms."
You: "Ok, but we shall measure boxes inch by inch."
So the wild blossoms met the measured
pleasure once again.
Some things never change!*



Sunaina Jain
is an Assistant Professor of English at
MCM DAV College, Chandigarh and her
poems have featured in a number of
literary journals as well as international
anthologies. She has co-edited a book
Happiness: An Eternal Quest of Being.

**Chandigarh Literary Society
Annual Poetry Competition 2023
3rd Prize Winner**

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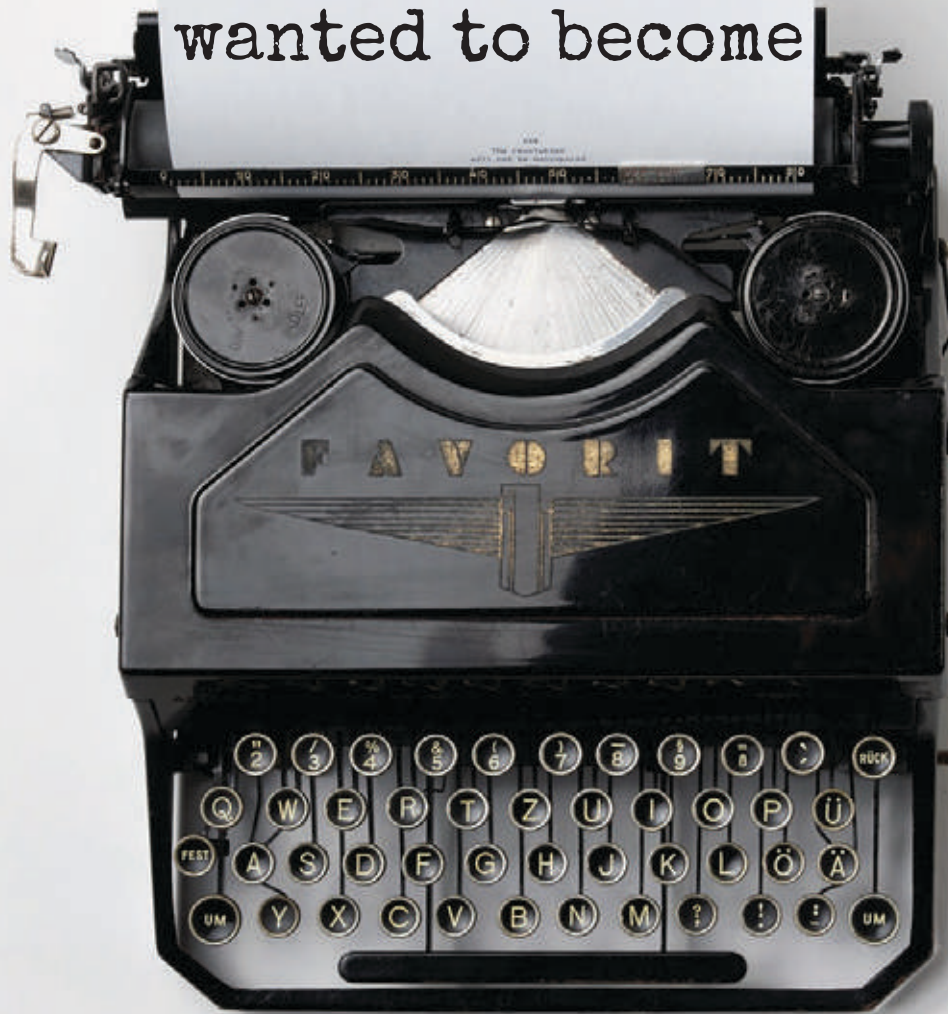
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