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# Grace

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# RHYVERS BEAT



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## FROM THE DESK OF GROUP EDITOR

It is said that grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected. The play of grace is deep and profound. It can be the grace of a dancer, the grace of a kind gesture, or the grace of forgiveness.

For centuries, literature has celebrated 'Divine Grace' through the use of symbolism, imagery, and metaphor. Literature has celebrated grace in myriad ways. In poetry, grace can be portrayed using imagery and metaphor. In prose, grace can be portrayed through character development and dialogue.

On the human plane, grace is the way we interact with each other and with the world around us. It is about finding meaning and purpose in life. It is about striving to be the best version of ourselves.

Grace is often associated with elegance, beauty, and kindness. When we live our lives with grace, we make the world a more beautiful place. Grace can be applied to many aspects of our lives, including our thoughts, actions, and expressions. When we approach life with grace of thought, we can see the good in others and in ourselves.

Living a life defined by grace is not always easy. It requires patience, understanding, and a willingness to see the good in others. Equally, the rewards of living a life defined by grace are immeasurable. When we live our lives with grace, we can find joy in the simple things in life. We can appreciate the beauty that surrounds us and find bliss.

Living a life defined by grace is a wonderful goal to strive towards. By approaching life with grace of thought, grace of action, and grace of expression, we can make the world a more beautiful place for ourselves and for others.

In our October edition, our contributors interpret the many shades and glories of grace to inspire and uplift our readers, and to bring the pages to life.

We invite you to enjoy the journey with us.

*Affan*

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)

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Book / Movie Reviews

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Last date to send entries

**16 October, 2023**

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# After She Missed The Train

Rahul called up his friends Sudha, Lalitha and Shyam.

“We will bring her belongings to Twilight Abode from the railway station. How could her family members abandon her, just because she missed the train on that rainy night? It looks like a pre-planned case of carelessness and irresponsibility on the part of her family members. She is a graceful human being who deserves to be treated with respect. She is not a fancy toy that can be dumped by her children after they have finished playing with it.”

For all these students of St. Xavier’s School in Vizag, Teacher Rose was a symbol of respect. The septuagenarian, had been an epitome of grace and respect for the amount of humanitarian work that she did. She started a separate school for all the underprivileged children living around the fishing hamlets of Bheemli.

“When I got a call from the Station Master that night, I rushed to the spot. Her son had taken away her mobile. She was waiting there for over two days. I could recognize her immediately, with her short height and graceful smile, that she held even at this age. She was heartbroken when none arrived from her family.

At last, the station master found her diary with my name and number in it.”

Rahul’s words brought tears to the eyes of each of the dedicated students of Teacher Rose. They were extremely grateful to their ever-graceful teacher. She had sheltered them, educated each one of them before teaching them to lead their life gracefully. It was because of her efforts that each one of them was well placed today.

“By the grace of God, you arrived to my rescue dear Rahul. Now, I know that the world is still full of good people. Please don’t call my children. I don’t want to go back to them. Take me somewhere where I can spend the last days of my life gracefully.”

Rahul recalled Teacher Rose’s voice, as she had spoken with a tone of absolute relief, while holding his hand firmly.

Teacher Rose’s eyes brimmed with happiness as she met her students, who had all arrived at The Twilight Abode, old-age home. Many elderly people spent their twilight years here. For Rahul and his classmates believed that,

“Our elders are our most revered asset. They deserve to live till the last day of their lives with dignity. They have laid our foundation stone, now they need the company of near and dear ones. So, step forward to give them a warm embrace. Fill their lives with a rainbow of hope. Never leave them alone for your better tomorrow.”



**Aditi Lahiry** is an English and French Language Teacher from Hyderabad. She is passionate about writing stories, poems and articles.



# Embracing Grace



In the grandtapestry of human existence, amidst the cacophony of our ambitions and pursuits, there exists a quiet and profound force that has the power to transform lives and mend the tattered threads of our shared humanity. This force is "grace." Grace is the gentle touch of empathy, the soothing balm of forgiveness, and the radiant light of compassion. It is the invisible thread that binds us all, the gift we can offer to one another to make this world a more beautiful place.

Grace, at its essence, is the embodiment of elegance and charm. It is not a mere superficial quality but a reflection of the depth of one's character. Graceful individuals possess an aura of serenity and an unspoken understanding of the human condition. They navigate the complexities of life with a poise that emanates from within, drawing others towards them like moths to a flame.

One of the most enchanting qualities of grace is its power to bridge divides and heal wounds. In a world often marred by division and discord, grace is the bridge that connects us, the salve that mends our scars. It teaches us the art of forgiveness, encouraging us to let go of grievances and find common ground with those who may seem different from us. In the act of forgiveness, we unlock the potential for reconciliation and healing.

Grace is not confined to grand gestures or extravagant acts of charity. It resides in the small, everyday moments of life, waiting to be discovered. It can be found in the simple act of lending a listening ear to a friend in need, in the warmth of a smile exchanged with a stranger, and in the patience exhibited during moments of frustration. These seemingly mundane acts, when infused with grace, become profound expressions of love and empathy.

In the realm of literature and art, grace often takes center stage as a source of inspiration. It is the graceful prose of a writer's words, the graceful strokes of a painter's brush, and the graceful movements of a dancer's body that transport us to realms of beauty and emotion. These creative expressions remind us that grace is a language spoken by the soul, transcending the boundaries of culture and time.

In a world where we often rush through life, grace encourages us to slow down and savor the moments that truly matter. It teaches us that happiness is not found in the pursuit of material wealth or the attainment of status but in the cultivation of a graceful heart. It invites us to be present, to cherish the beauty that surrounds us, and to be mindful of our interactions with others.



## Dharamdeep

is an aspiring poet residing in the serene city of Ambala, Haryana. He is currently pursuing English Honours.

# *A Content Heart*

*The dancing soul one with Him  
Each glide, a gentle rhythm within  
The sweet whisper in the wind's embrace  
An aura of love in every place.*

*The musical chime in the rustling trees  
The calming gentleness in the breeze  
A grace filled heart with a peaceful spirit  
And Angels divine dancing with ease.*

*The bowing of a bloom to the morning sun  
Healing of wounds when forgiveness is done  
A soothing stream coloring all chaos  
The Divine Grace guides, animosities shun.*

*Grace, in His creations we perceive  
Grace, in all the love we receive  
A content heart finds solace and peace  
Boundless love and endless release.*

*Grace is being graceful, not being stringent  
Grace is the gentle smile of an infant  
Loving, forgiving, with no hard feeling  
That is Grace, and the ultimate healing!!*



**Parminder Soni**  
lives in Chandigarh  
and has 3 books to  
her credit.







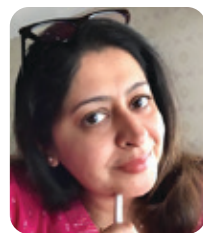
# Āmāra śuli

The fascinating fresh fragrance from Shuli announced the arrival of the Goddess. Shuli - the graceful autumn flower with a captivating divine scent has left me mesmerized for as long as I remember. Having stood under that tree many times during my autumn evening walks I vowed to have her stand in my garden one day. A tree from heaven they say, Parijat with ethereal beautiful flowers that replicate the sun. Gods themselves were smitten by her beauty and fought amongst themselves to lay a claim. Harshingar as she is fondly called, is a blossom made out of

love. There goes a legend of a one-sided love between Princess Parijat and the mighty Sun. When the Sun refused her love the Princess couldn't bear the rejection and killed herself. Thus from her ashes rose a tree filled with divine pristine white flowers with saffron filled heart. Shuli blooms only after the sunsets, her withered flowers fall like teardrops at night, as if she is shedding tears of her unrequited love. Amara Shuli, I feel a deep connection with this intriguing flower and vow to have her stand with me in my garden one day.

*Thousand rising suns  
kiss the earth on autumn nights  
full of tales to tell*

*{A Haibun is a literary form that originated in Japan. Japanese poet Matsuo Basho created this poetic form. It is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that combines Prose and Haiku. The prose basically describes a story, a scene or anecdote and is followed by a Haiku.}*



**Preeti S. Manaktala** is a published author, poet, blogger and freelance editor. She has four books to her credit.

# *When Faith Fell in Love with Grace*

*Long ago, in a land unknown, Faith sauntered all alone.*

*He was a complete half, a fully empty half-vessel.*

*As he moved, he felt a presence- his heart started pounding and the time slowed down;*

*He turned around only to find Fear covering Faith's ground.*

*Faith was brave; Faith was powerful.*

*He fought with Fear, he bled and bruised but Fear was nowhere to be found.*

*Exhausted, Faith fell asleep, only to be woken up by an ethereal melody being sung near an altar tree.*

*He traced the music to find a kneeling woman revering the Cross-shaped tree.*

*Faith was consumed by her;*

*The woman bore long thick hair juxtaposed to her fair and bright skin.*

*Her lips were full and seemed as if a rose bled on them.*

*He knelt beside the woman, facing the tree- he took her hand and beseeched her to oblige him  
with her name.*

*The woman spoke- her voice, as though a harmony of David's harp.*

*"Grace," she spoke.*

*Faith touched her feet and said,*

*"O! glorious Grace, O! seraphic healer! I am Faith"*

*"My soul married yours before they knew our bodies! O! divine light, become one with me!"*

*That day, Faith fell in love with Grace, and they both merged as an entity. Grace is Faith's better half, Grace is  
Faith's ultimate prize.*

*Soon, Grace bore Faith's child and they chose to call her Blessing.*



**Sahira Jain**

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



# Hidden Rainbows

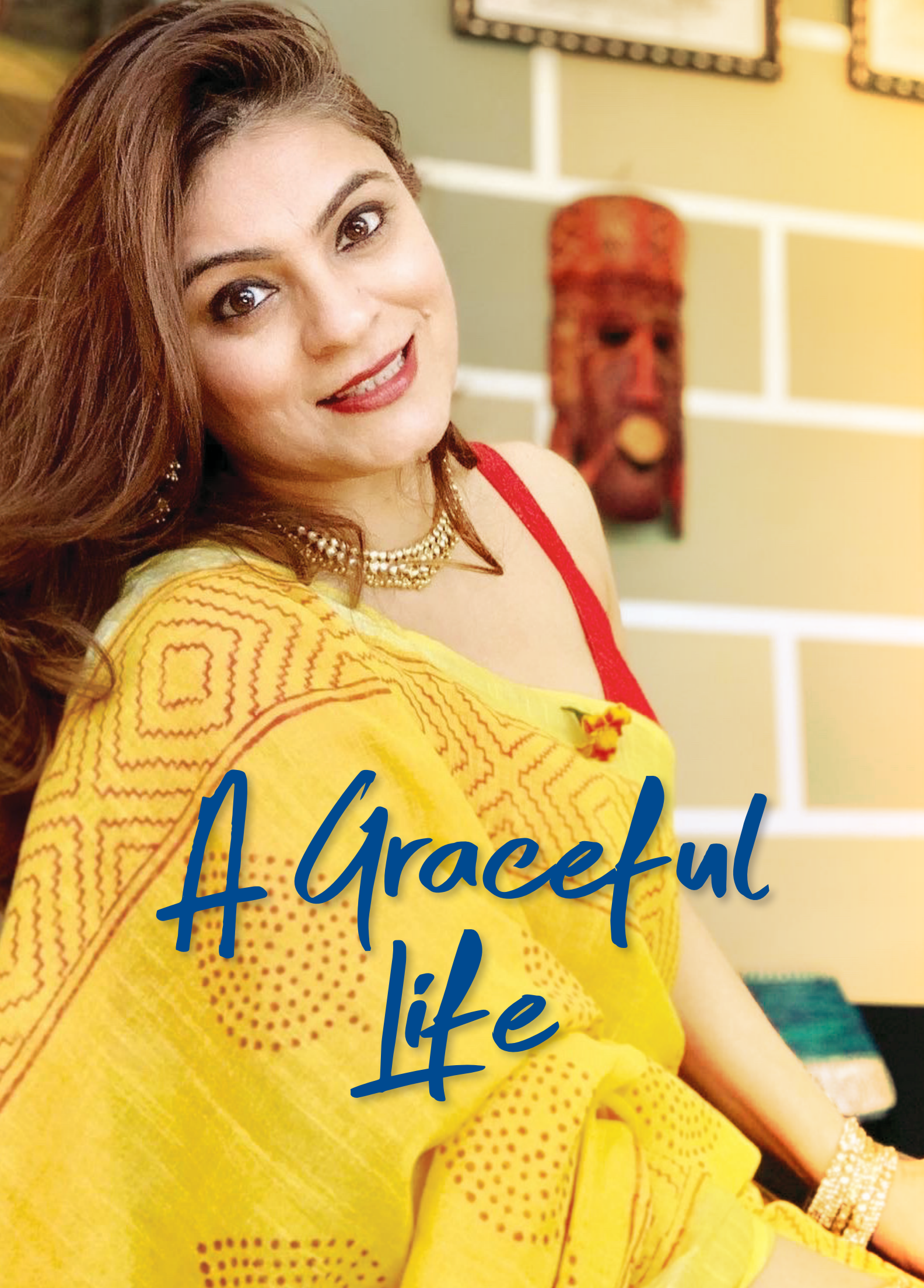
The inception was a blur  
With many possibilities,  
The end as mysterious  
With many probabilities.

Here I'm left with speculations;

Remembrances of  
A visible spectrum  
Perceiving shadows and  
Hidden nuances of a rainbow,  
Like lilies sprouting  
Out of dead land.



**Samreen F. Rehman**  
works as a  
consultant in the  
field of social welfare  
and is passionately  
involved in animal  
welfare work.



*A Graceful  
Life*

It's been years since I came out of the shell of a teenager and witnessed the storms of life in many ways. All these years, down the line have processed me for what I am today. Being a naive, soft and bubbly girl at heart, I couldn't understand the twists and turns of life that could unfold the biggest fears as well as turning the lamp on for bigger purposes in life.

I couldn't understand from the ground of my innocent nature that the world works in a completely different way. What looks like gold may be proven as amassed clay. At first I used to suffer from the insecurities of being attacked and many times I used to find myself pouring my heart out alone after a poisonous fight.

But learning through the process of how silence holds the utmost power and how knowing what we hold inside are our utmost strength can change the surrounding scenarios upside down. I have become unbothered for what truly doesn't serve any purpose in my journey. I, still, am in the learning process but truly elated with the steady growth.

Propitiousness, or in simple words, kindness or grace has the utmost transformative engines in itself that a society with a hard-stoned inside or tough texture will not be able to understand.

One of my favourite things to do is offering 'Namaskar' in gratitude to this ever-expanding vast sky that is ever-silent but indicating so many things so transparently in quietude. This has helped me understand the power of humility

**Propitiousness, or in simple words, kindness or grace has the utmost transformative engines in itself that a society with a hard-stoned inside or tough texture will not be able to understand.**

in my regular life massively. Chaos can only put the mind to its utmost repugnance and dissonance. But to bring harmony is to go inward and do the much needed applications to nurture our unhealed parts.

All these years of massive change in the socio-cultural context have a lot to offer to this easily convinced, palpable and trend-prone society. What is to be remembered through all of it is that change must not make us ungrateful, graceless and attacking bullets but to open a safe place for all of us to tune in with the harmony of nature, to be flexible and feel sheltered to nurture ourselves and unfold innumerable opportunities to become the most beautiful beings inside out.

Now that I have, with my little knowledge, understood the power of softness and innocence, I have been very alert with the vigorously changing dynamics of society. I have understood 'grace' and welcomed the humbleness of this endless sky!



**Suchismita Ghoshal**  
hails from West Bengal, India and is an author and bilingual internationally published poetess.

# *A Wishful Villanelle*

*May the dew on my windowsill never be in dearth  
and the world whizzing beyond may remain at bay.  
Sway either way but still the earth, still the earth.*

*Bless the milkboy– sprinkling my mornings with his mirth  
in the extra three minutes he stops to start my day;  
may this morning dew on my porch never be in dearth.*

*May the mud on rubber soles map our toes' girth,  
thence they may not flinch at the feel of cool, sweet hay–  
curling in only to still the earth, still the earth.*

*Bless the breeze that poked the clothesline to unberth  
clothes carousing in an open sauna, seeking a foray;  
may the dew on my balcony never be in dearth.*

*Today, may the moon walk me again to the warm hearth  
of my lost home calling out from shadows, to say  
come back and still the earth, still the earth.*

*Shubhangi thanks thee and we revel in our worth,  
free from a black and white world– in need of browns and grays.  
So I pray, may the dew on my windowsill never be in dearth.  
All I ask is to still the earth, still the earth.*



**Shubhangi Singh** writes content, copy as well as social commentary from the idyllic setting of Chandigarh. She has written for magazines as well as local newspapers.

# The Peacock Flower

My heart danced when my eyes set upon them  
For there stood the peacock flowers  
Rising from the bare earth  
Like a galaxy, the colours burst forth

A picture of grace in  
Joyous abandon  
Divine harmony  
Radiant energy

Their petals – feisty flames flecked with gold  
Emanating a magnificence untold  
Reaching outward were these dancing flames  
Drawing me inward into their joyous frame

Your stylish stamens  
Gracefully pirouetting like a seeker  
Lost in devotion  
To the divine

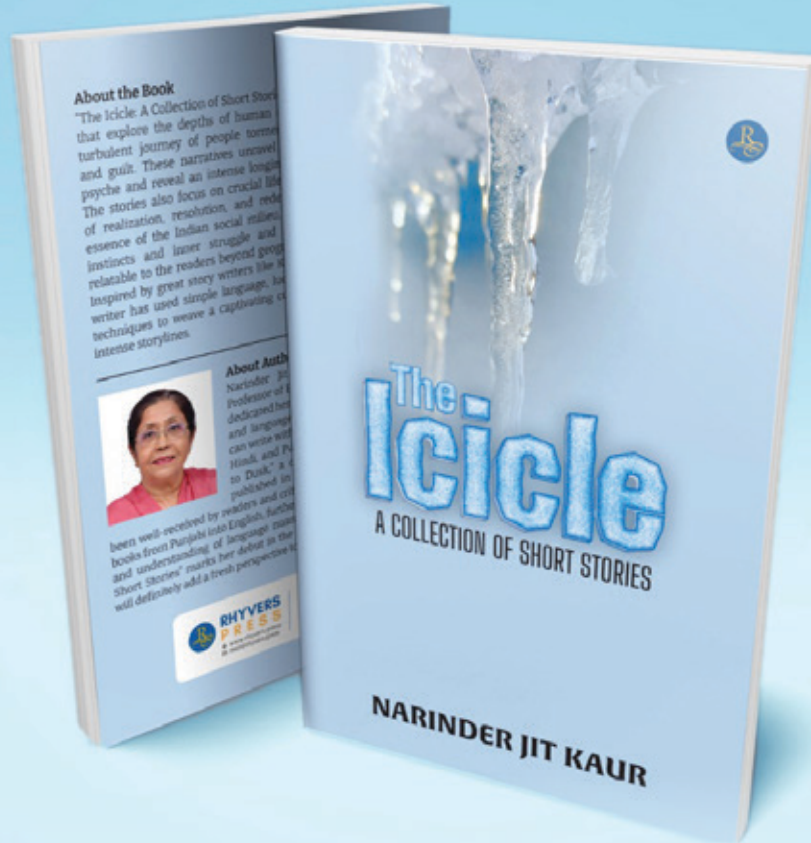
Lost in the divine harmony of nature  
An exuberance of the spirit  
Like a spiritual aspirant  
Dancing to the universal cadence

I become one with these divine flowers  
A seeker in joyous bhakti  
Rejoicing in the love of the universe  
In the limitless grace of the divine.




**Avantika Vijay Singh**

is a writer, editor, photographer, and poet. She has been awarded the Nissim International Prize for Poetry Runners-Up 2023.



Author Narinder Jit Kaur's short story collection *The Icicle* launched by Dr. Sumita Misra, IAS Chairperson CLS, in presence of Mr Ramesh Vinayak, Executive Editor, Hindustan Times and Mr Affan Yesvi, Director, Rhyvers Publishing at Chandigarh Press Club on 20 September 2023.




**Author: Narinder Jit Kaur**  
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# People are ready to sponsor fashion shows but nobody sponsors a noble cause like books and reading

A Farmer at heart, State Information Commissioner for Punjab, Journalist by profession, Columnist and Consulting editor for Day & Night news channel, meet Author and Biographer **Khushwant Singh** - man who dons the sorting hat, as he discusses his literary journey in an exclusive interview with our Executive Editor, **Dr. Sonika Sethi**

## How did your writing career begin and what prompted you to come into writing?

I used to write in school and the Irish brother who was my class teacher, Brother Burke, he would tell my mother at various parent-teacher meetings that "Mrs. Ahluwalia, your son might not pass class 10, but he'll write one day." So I think that has remained as a sort of support system for me or a pillar that whenever I've been in doubt, I think of that one line and that one line has been my strength.

If brother Burke could say that, then really I need not worry about the critics or anything or something. So I think my writing goes back to my school days. I had a magazine to earn my pocket money. In class six, I came out with a magazine called *Boomerang*. It was a collection of various articles. It had those puzzles and all that stuff which I used to staple together. My grandmother gave me, I remember, 200 rupees to get it cyclostyled and

then I would sell it in school for 2 rupees a copy. That kind of became a fashion as other students also started doing it.

Then I started writing on agriculture because as a young farmer, there were so many things I wanted to talk about. I got a chance to write in Times of India and then for the agriculture page of The Tribune. I was a regular contributor on a lot of issues relate to farming- marketing, how to grow kinnows, how to grow poplars, how to harvest, what are the issues, WTO, etc. Later, I started reporting for Times of India. At some point then I decided, yeah, let me attempt a book. So, I've been kind of involved in some sort of writing at every stage of my life.

## Tell us something about your first book *Sikhs Unlimited* and the biography of *Fauja Singh, the centurion marathon runner*.

*Sikhs Unlimited* was published in 2007, though I started writing it in 2005. Basically, this happened



after 9/11. Since I was covering the Doaba, Hoshiarpur and all those areas of Punjab for Times of India, I used to get a lot of emails from all over America saying that post 9/11, there was a lot of hate crime.

So, I thought let me do a book where I write about, some interesting and successful Sikh men and women and showcase to the world their contributions. The impact they've created in their adopted countries, to their adopted countries. I mean, they're part of their economic growth,

they're part of their culture and everything. So that's how I came up with my first book that was published by Rupa Publishers.

Then I wrote Fauja Singh's Biography, *Turbaned Tornado*, which was released in the House of Lords in 2011, and by that time, the Editor of the newspaper, Hindustan Times, had commissioned me a column 'Punjabi by Nature', which I wrote for 9 years. I quit writing that in 2017. First it was weekly, then it was fortnightly, but I never missed it. I never missed a deadline. So for 9 consecutive

years I wrote this column which was much loved and looked forward to.

**Maharaj in Denims was your first novel. The title itself is very intriguing and the story is equally captivating. Can you tell us something about it?**

*Maharaja in Denims* is a work of historical fiction about Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is about a young boy Hari who gets flashbacks of being Maharaja Ranjit Singh in his past life. For example, when Hari tries to cross the Satluj river, he gets flashbacks of the Treaty that he as Maharaja Ranjit Singh signed with the British, when he's in a bar he is reminded of a brew prepared by his Hungarian Homeopath physician, when he's with his girlfriend, he is reminded of his time spent with Rani Moran or Rani Jindan and such like instances in a parallel narrative that juxtapose Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Empire and contemporary India.

Initially, I gave this novel the title 'Rising from the Ashes'. However, when I sent the manuscript to one of my friends in Denver, he suggested that I should give it some interesting title. "Make your Maharajah a little contemporary. Make him wear jeans", he said. That is how we came up with the title 'Maharaja in Denims'. This novel came out in 2014, an year when I travelled extensively, attended the New York Literature Festival, met Salman Rushdie and both of us shared a toast, too.

**You are associated with the Hoshiarpur Literary Society which is involved with community reading projects and organises the Hoshiarpur Literature Festival. How did you come up with these ideas of community reading projects?**

When I was farming, I had this New Age Farmers' Association and my farm lawns were always open to seminars, to discuss new methodology new technology in farming, on WTO and Internet marketing. I was the first one who started internet marketing. I was always of the opinion that



whatever you do, you must bring more knowledge for everyone to participate. So the literary society was also an idea to bring a knowledge based narrative into being.

When my friend, Sanna Gupta, came up to me and said that she wanted to start a book club, I told her that instead we should start a literary society as an NGO. And then, we started organising literary events and you would not believe that the first event was held at a Dhaba.

From Dhaba, we shifted to my house lawn and the first Hoshiarpur Literature Festival was held in my lawn. It is a small organisation and we do not get any funds from anywhere but it's just a small effort and perhaps it is the only Literature Festival held in Punjab. Slowly, we came into some funds which we decided to invest in a mobile library under the slogan '*Padhda Punjab, Vadhda Punjab*' (A Reading Punjab, A Progressive Punjab). We even bought an e-vehicle so that it was environment friendly and hired a person who doubled as the driver as well as the librarian.

My only idea behind this project was, to divert



the youth towards reading and outdo the *thekkas* of Punjab. Right now we have two libraries one of which has been gifted to us by CANAM. But there have been issues since we are not a rich society- we are facing financial crunch, it's difficult to maintain the library, cull out the driver's salary, pay expenses for batteries and such like. It's difficult to find sponsors for such causes in Punjab. People are ready to sponsor fashion shows but nobody sponsors a noble cause like books and reading.

**You have written Captain Amarinder Singh's biography, The People's Maharaja. Writing the biography of a living person is a daunting task. What were the challenges you came across in accomplishing this task?**

Sanjana Roy was the managing editor of *Amarallis* when *Maharaja in Denims* was published. She went and joined *Hay House* in 2012 as its Managing Editor. She offered me the project of writing the biography of Amarinder Singh as I knew him well. Those were election days, people expected Congress to win and everybody thought that he

would be the next Chief Minister of Punjab. But I didn't approach him immediately.

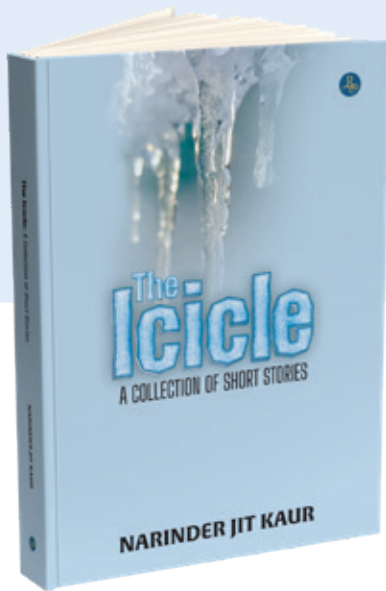
I took my time and finally when the results were out and Congress lost the election, I approached him. He was reluctant and laughed the idea off saying, "Who will read it?" as the sentiment was low. I told him that I've known him for so many years and there are so many stories and anecdotes to share from his political career and experiences. Military experiences and other aspects that have a lot of ancestry and history. So he agreed and honestly speaking I did not face many challenges except for the fact that he would disappear for days and wouldn't give me time for months which would halt the writing process. The book, therefore, took four years to complete but other than that no challenge.

He was very open, very candid and he never asked me to edit or delete anything. I learnt a lot about the political milieu of those times from him and I also researched a lot about Punjab's contemporary history. I read books like Mark Tully's *Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle*, P C Alexander's works, who was the Principal Secretary to Mrs Indira Gandhi, Arjun Singh's memoirs, who was the Governor of Punjab during the turbulent days of terrorism and so on. But it was a sheer delight to write his biography.

**What are you currently working upon? What are your latest projects?**

I am currently working on 'The Global Sikh Trail' an online open resource of short biographies of eminent and impactful Sikhs in the world. So, it is like a continuation of *Sikhs Unlimited*. This is a seriously academic work and not like coffee table books. I choose the stories about the people I want to represent and then the stories are written by people whom I have engaged for the purpose. It includes stories of people like Mr Manmohan Singh, the ex-Prime Minister, Bicky Oberoi, the owner of Oberoi Group of hotels, and some top Chefs. I am also looking forward to getting them translated into three languages- Punjabi, Hindi and French.

## Frozen In The Moment: The Icicle



Book Review of author Narinder Jit Kaur's short story collection *The Icicle* by Dr. Sonika Sethi, published by Rhyvers Press.

*'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman... It is civilization as a whole that develops this product.'* Simone de Beauvoir

Narinder Jit Kaur's debut short story collection *The Icicle* consists of 12 short stories and each one of the stories is a hard hitting rebuttal to the argumentative patriarchal society which treats women as 'products' that can be bartered, massacred or sacrificed at the altar of honour at the sweet will of its male counterpart.

The eponymous story 'The Icicle' is the story of a hardcore naxalite woman, Shibu, who is being felicitated by her village folk as she comes out of her five year police custody. Her husband, Pottu, also a naxalite is dead and for Shibu, Pottu's death is frozen in her mind's frame as an icicle. The story has a paradoxical twist to it which only a master storyteller can envision and engineer.

Narinder Jit's characters and canvas are neither limited to a particular type nor background. Rather, they extend in time zones from the pre-Partition to the post-9/11 days. The backdrop shuffles between the urban, semi-urban and rural surrounds. The themes, too, are multi-hued and varied. While stories like 'The Lonely Woman from Banikhet' and 'The Reverse Cycle' bring to light the pathos of lonely, dependent and angst-ridden women from the remote villages of India; 'Who Killed Me?' depicts the plight of thousands of smothered voices and snuffed lives of women effected by the political division of the country.

'Silent Conversation' is a polemical story about a young woman struggling to find a foothold in her personal and professional life. 'Peanuts and Cheese Balls' challenges the concept of pseudo-feminism prevalent among young, financially stable yet misled by ambition women of the metros. The author clearly demarcates the thin line segregating self-respect from self-absorption.

'The Breadwinner' is a heart wrenching story of Kamli, an eight year old beggar who comprehends the true notion of a breadwinner in the family as her father lies dead in the shanty and neighbours make a fuss while arranging a 'shroud' for the dead man. 'Epiphany' explores an unusual yet gratifying experience of a young daily wager, Jagira, who is overjoyed by the fact that he has been a part of the construction team of the road on which the Kargil War-winning army is shown on the national television, taking out a victory march.

The stories are incisive and explore the depths of human existence as also the turbulent journeys of people tormented by self-doubt, insecurities, and guilt. As the author herself puts it, "The stories depict the essence of the Indian social milieu and focus on human instincts." The book is a must read for literature lovers.

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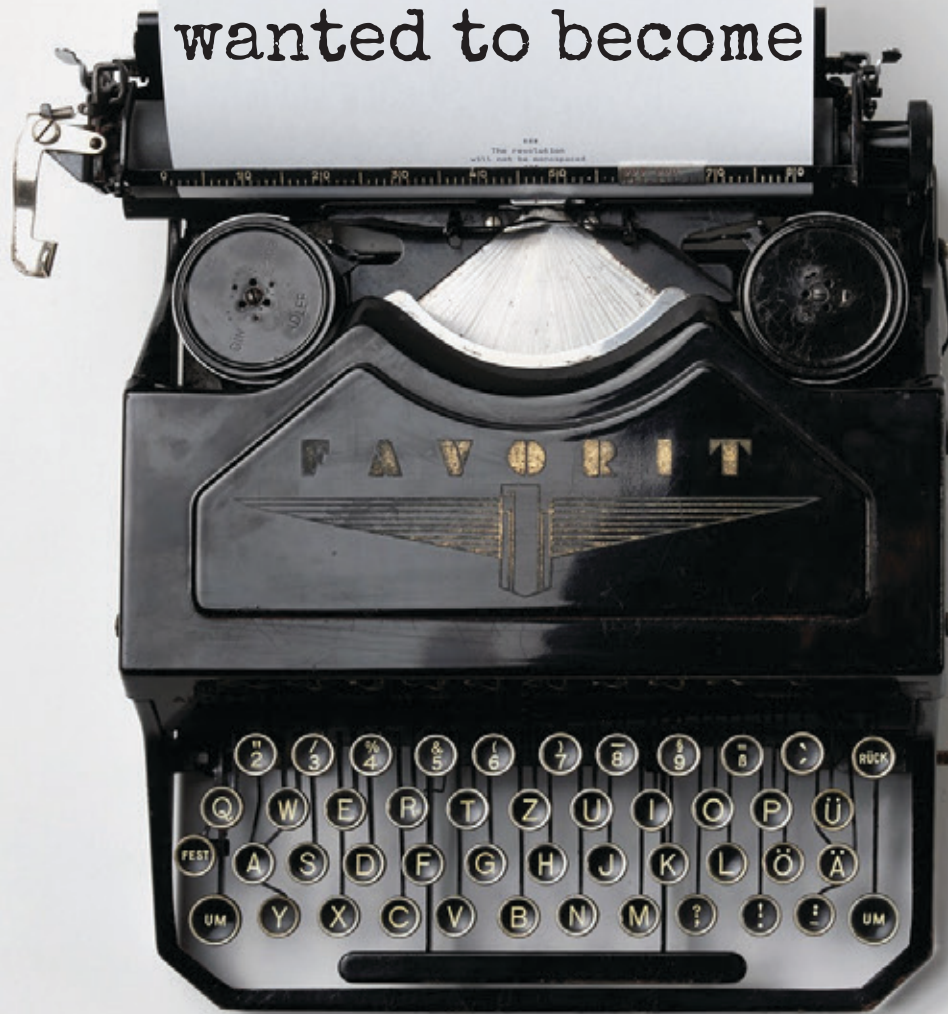
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