

World Harmony through Writing

SHARING STORIES

CHANGE MAKERS

Community Library
Mirror Man
Graphologist
Behind Bars & Beyond
Cosmos of Thoughts

**MRIDULA
KOSHY**

Picture Credits @Tejinder Singh

BOOKS

FOR KIDS

Writing Contest
Contest Winners
Short Stories
Poetry

30000

Member Community



Katha Org
#Letsmakestories
@Pristine Books
Did You Know?



Piyush



Bhanubhai



Kosha



Avik

Editor's Desk

Hello dearest readers,

Sharing Stories is here with its all new edition for this month. The past month witnessed festivities in a new and different light. We were inside our homes and celebrated Dusshera and Durga Puja in this new normal. We definitely missed so many things of the festive season...like Pandal hopping, dressing up and gorging on street foods.

However, we also realized that the real essence of the festivities lies in carrying out the message of goodness; the faith deep within to carry our duties with all hope and dignity.

Often, we see our children following the rituals and traditions without ever understanding the logic and reason behind them. If only they are introduced to various concepts of religion and humanity at an early age with clarity, we shall be able to lay a solid foundation of society for the future generation.

The world today is inclined more towards visual media and the art of reading is somewhere lagging behind. I call reading an art, because like writing, one has to develop the reading habit through consistent practice. Sharing Stories believes in the phrase, 'Catch them young' when it comes to reading habits in children.

As you all know, Sharing Stories carries a larger vision of 'World Harmony Through Writing' to bring about a positive change in the existing society. Our recent and larger than life campaign, 'Empowering Our Kids' is an extension of this vision. We asked our community members to suggest 20 must read books for Children, and, the response was amazing. I was overwhelmed to see that our community members were immensely encouraging when it came to develop reading habit in children. Very soon we shall be actively promoting this campaign and taking it to next level. We invite your suggestions and look forward to the generous support too.

Coming to this month's edition of magazine, we have again tried to bring varied personalities' interviews. I am sure reading about their author journey and the unique circumstances which they endured shall surely ignite the spark of writing in you.

'When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.'
Alexander Graham Bell

As writers, we should always keep our eyes open and look for that streak of lightening, even in the darkest zone. Then only the myth of 'writers' block' can be broken.

I am sure our readers along with the interviews will enjoy the stories and regular featured articles too. The festival of lights is round the corner and I am hopeful that it will illuminate not just our surroundings but also cast its glow of positivity and self-belief on us from within.

On behalf of Team Sharing Stories, wishing all our readers and community members a Happy and Prosperous Diwali in advance.

Happy reading...Blissful Writings!

Piya Gajbe



A young girl with dark, wavy hair is smiling and clapping her hands. She is wearing a yellow and orange patterned shawl over a dark blue top. The background is a teal wall with some peeling paint.

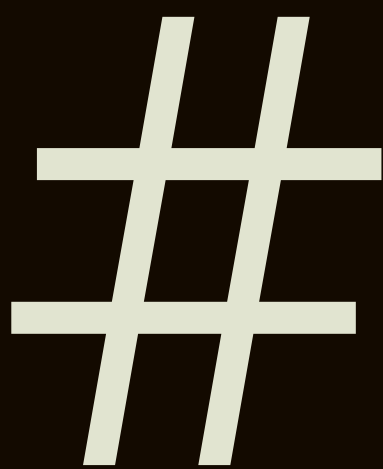
SHARING STORIES
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OUR
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INTERVIEWS

MRIDULA KOSHY
AVIK GANGOPADHYAY
PIYUSH GOEL
KOSHA SHAH
BHANUBHAI PATEL



LOVE FOR LITERATURE

SAY IT WITH IDIOM
WORDSMITH'S CORNER

SHORT STORY
NOT AT THE COST OF
SELF- RESPECT



PARTNERSHIPS

#LETSMAKESTORIESDINO
(THE INNOCENT FACE)
(BUTTERFLY DANCE)
(AFTD QUILL)

@PRISTINE.BOOKS
(A BURNING BY MEGHA
MAJUMDAR)

*IGNITE
FROM WITHIN THE
CONFINES

#KATHA
TREE BY KLARA KÖTTNER-
BENIGNI



GIVEAWAYS

- STUPID SOMEBODY
BY ROHIT DAWESAR



CONTESTS

#WORDIMPACT
#PICTUREPROMPTPOETR
Y
#1000WORDSTALES
WINNING ENTRIES OF
OCTOBER



BLOG SERIES

DID YOU KNOW ?

AUTHOR

MRIDULA KOSHY

Mridulaji, you are an accomplished author. At the same time you have been a Trade Union Organiser, Community Organiser, and a Librarian too. How did your journey take its shape?

My experience as a teenage migrant to the United States shaped a lot of who I am today in terms of my politics. I went from being a privileged member of Indian society to someone who was at the mercy of a new society structured around racism and anti immigrant ideology. Thankfully, I had good instincts both around recognizing oppression and around responding to it by seeking and acting in solidarity with others similarly oppressed. Many of my fellow Indians in the United States have trouble identifying with their fellow immigrants from the Indian and other communities. Their instincts honed from generations of upper class and caste upbringing in India are warped to say the least and they identify with their oppressors and seek to appease them. Hence the Indian American Howdy Modi brigade.

How long on average does it take you to write a book? What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?

It takes around three years to write one book. It took me 10 years to write three books. I don't write anymore because I cannot write and do other things. Some other people can, like the excellent poet Michael Creighton, who is also coincidentally my partner. He writes, has a professional life, a family life and even a social life. I do one thing at a time. Right now I am working for the free library movement.

Your books have received highly acclaimed awards. How did you think of writing your first book, 'If It Is Sweet, which was also shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award 2010? Who is the favourite character from any of your books and why?



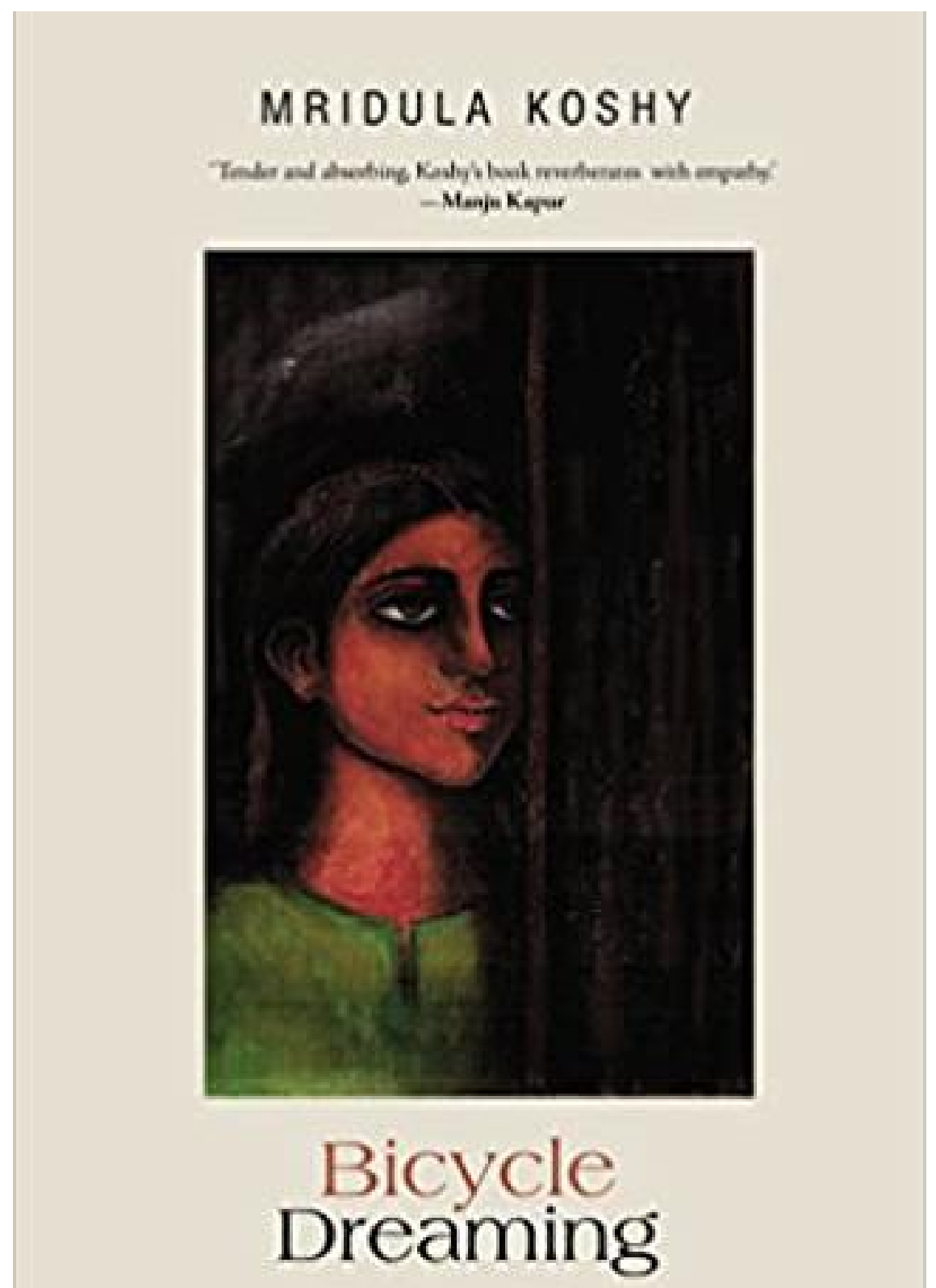
My first book was *If It Is Sweet*, a collection of short stories. Writing was almost the last resort choice for me, something I had avoided for 35 years of my life. I think I was scared to write because of the possibility that I might write poorly. And of course I did for the first few years. It took time, discipline, numerous efforts, continuing to live as a voracious reader, but now as a reader who brought the lens of trying to become a writer to my reading. I began writing in 2005 when I returned to India after 20 years of life abroad. But returning, I found a changed country, perhaps a more divided country than the one I left. At least the rhetoric of the times was quite different from that of the 70s and 80s when I had last lived in India. If I could have found my way to organizing, to becoming a part of an organization that works for justice, I doubt I would have become a writer. But instead I knew very few people in New Delhi, the city to which I returned and the only way I could think to be a part of the city was to write. I wrote about the city, I wrote to the city. And yes the city is my favourite character.

Are you working on anything at the present about which you would like to share with your readers?

I run an organization which operates four free community libraries. Thousands of people read voraciously in our libraries. We are a provocation to anyone who believes books are for the few or believes the self-justifying “those people won’t read.” Our organization is also a lab for learning how to grow readers. That is, we develop best practices that help first generation school goers, and anyone else for that matter, to become lifelong readers. We also advocate for a free library movement, which will usher in excellent and free public libraries throughout the country. Nothing makes a democracy stronger than a citizenry that has the power to think. And nothing helps us think with greater strength and humanity than books. It stands to reason we must build access to books so we can grow a thoughtful society and a just and democratic country.

Please let our readers know more about your Free Library Movement and TCLP. How can any person be a part of this movement? What made you take steps towards the Library Movement in India?

Anyone can become a member of one of our libraries. If you can afford to pay 3000 a month for library membership in some amazing library you might think to head there except there is no difference between those amazing fees-for-membership libraries and our amazing libraries. No difference aside from the fact that we charge ZERO fees. Our libraries are spacious, have tens of thousands of books, free access to the net, programming that includes book clubs, art, theatre, music, dance, creative writing, science etc. I don’t think there is anything I’ve listed that anyone would argue shouldn’t belong to everyone. Shouldn’t every child be able to choose to play a musical instrument or find themselves in a Science workshop discussing their cosmic address and making their own working cardboard telescope. Yet we build a society in which only the few can have such experiences. And these experiences are not extra or luxury. They are basic. Basic to being able to build our capacity to dialogue with ourselves and with one another.



People can also join the library as volunteers and hopefully eventually grow themselves into free library activists. Volunteers do a lot of the labour of running the library side by side with staff and members. It is this labour that helps us to operate for free. Volunteers also spend their privilege on behalf of members who don’t have the same privileges. Some are filmmakers. Others doctors. Others teachers. Others lawyers. The former Bombay journalist for example reached out to A list actors and actresses for the items they donated to the exciting fundraiser auction we are holding in December. This is a rudimentary example of how you spend your privilege on behalf of others. Our architect volunteers spend it very directly when they design our libraries. Our educator volunteers build the curriculum that is normally only available to the richest children.



According to you, which are the 5 books everyone should read and also who are your top 3 authors and what impact did they have in your journey as a writer?

I don't have such a list. We are all so different from one another and our needs can be different too. I will mention books that help us think about one thing we all need: justice. These are some books that have helped me think about the big questions in life while serving up entertaining story telling at the same time. The Old Testament in the Bible is one such book. I also like Karen Armstrong's, *In the Beginning*. It helped me deal with my spiritual loneliness. Haldor Laxness' *Independent People* helped me as a writer. He is such a gutsy writer and I realized that I needed to be less afraid of making a fool of myself. I return all the time to Elliot Weinberger's essays for their experiments with form. Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury* is an experiment on so many levels. I like experiments. Experiments shed new light, they are often how we course-correct and we are often enough on the wrong road or stuck at a seeming impasse.

Tell us a bit about your family, likes and dislikes as a person. Is Mridula Koshy as a librarian and an activist different from the Mridula Koshy the person?

Yes, definitely I am different out in the world than I am home. I can't really say too much about it as every attempt turns into some sort of performance of myself and so no, I can't really tell you who I am at home. My partner says I am silly. My children probably would say something else.

Could you share a few tips for Young Authors? If you had to do something differently as a child or teenager to become a better writer as an adult, what would you do?

I would advise them there isn't much to be afraid of besides lack of discipline. Being afraid of making a fool of yourself when you haven't even written yet is almost a definition for cowardice. That's who I used to be. There are very few professions that don't require discipline. Being a parent for example requires you to get up every morning. So writing too is just another profession and there is little to be gained from tying it to ideas of inspiration or talent. Parents don't wait for inspiration to parent and don't get bogged down in questioning their talent for parenting. If a book is to be written, search for the discipline to write it. Ideally fix a time of day and make a commitment to the hours you have to spare. Give up much else in your life so you can find the spare hours. Don't give up on those who depend on you - your children, for example. But definitely narrow your focus to the writing. Once you have the book, you can engage in all manner or embarrassment, regret and self-incrimination. You can also take the alternate path which many writers choose to take and be delusional. What matters is there is a book - good, bad or indifferent. There is a possibility that it will contribute something worthwhile to the ongoing conversation about who we are, and how we are to live together.

WHAT IF ROUND

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

My three children, though they are not things.

What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

Our failure to recognize we are brothers and sisters.

What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do ?

Put a free and excellent library within walking distance of everyone. That's the same as putting the best of humanity within walking distance of every human being.

RAPID FIRE

At Sharing Stories, we have an ongoing campaign 'World Harmony through Writing' where we encourage writers to pen down their deepest internal thoughts, daily for at least fifteen minutes. Their new ideas and profound thinking shall help to bring out some positive changes in the world we live. We would love to hear your thoughts about this initiative. Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice?

I don't actually. I suppose writing can be spiritual, just as it can be therapeutic or cathartic or painful. What matters is that if you are trying to do it, then you get on with it and get it done. If you are trying to stop then you stop, ideally with few regrets. Writing is not the most important thing or the only important thing you can do in life. It is alright to do it or not do it, but it would be a waste of your life if you waffle around about the doing of it.

Favourite....

Place: Delhi

Person: Michael

Food: Red Fish Curry (I'm a vegetarian)

Beverage: kombucha

Your other Talents: I know how to build an organisation

First Love: my Mother

Favourite Quote: "you are who you pretend to be."

Favorite character from a book- Anna Karenina

THE COMMUNITY LIBRARY PROJECT 2019



An Initiative by Mridula Koshy

Avik Gangopadhyay

Author & Graphologist

Sometimes, we do not get a chance to thank each one who has helped us in our Journey."

Let the readers get a chance to know about all the important people who have played a part in this 'Author Journey of Yours'.

Very much so. A private person by nature, I swim through my own inner journey. A voyager at heart, my thirst of being wonder-dipped takes me to places less visited, be it through travelling or be it to newer dimensions in my spheres of thoughts and knowledge.

Well, I started writing a suspense crime drama when I was around 8 years of age but it was primarily with imitating my father, who used to sit and write at regular hours that initiated me into everything. I worked on it for 2 years and it took a shape of a thriller with too many comic elements in it. I also wrote bilingual limerick-like poems in French- Bengali, Sanskrit- Bengali, French-Sanskrit, as I was then learning both French and Sanskrit languages, I enjoyed lighter moments with languages in my own way.

My father, Late Manab Gangopadhyay, a novelist extraordinaire, known for creating "an idiom of mind," has shaped all that I am. A noted academician, litterateur, critic and philosopher like him as a father made me interdisciplinarian at the core. My mother Late Sriparna Gangopadhyay a celebrated classical dancer and singer of songs of Tagore and light classical Bhajans, have also mentored my emotional and finer aesthetic perceptions. I also intend to mention the role of Bengal, my part of the world, which has produced a galaxy of class writers in world literature. I am very much born out of it.

Later on, with the passage of time, I found all the ancient epics of the world, selected Greco-Roman drama, works during the Italian and European Renaissance, late Victorian, modern and postmodern poets, novelists and dramatists across the globe, including Asian literature have had immense influence on my creative and critical bent.



The "critic, columnist and academic" label has been there as a known tag with me both at home and abroad. But my first collection of stories had been released at Oxford, Kolkata, in 2019, and I am much gratified, that it's a success. The sacred and enigmatic space of learning played cynosure all through my life. My literature revolves keeping a very close proximity to History and evolution.

Tell us a bit about the books you have written. Who is the favourite character from your book and why? Are you working on anything at the present you would like to share with your readers about?

My first book Quest for Uncertainty, a collection of critical essays on opinions, truth & theories on Classical, English, American, French, German, Norwegian, Indian Literature & Aesthetics (from Socrates to Rabindranath Tagore) was published in the year 2000. An author with 31 titles, I would prefer here to be selective in mentioning some of the core areas of my endeavor.

Death of Language (Bilingual) is usually regarded as my magnum opus. The scope of exploring the notion of dead languages is still limited. This edition for the first time explores the world of the dead languages, extinct languages, endangered languages, the withering cultural heritage along with death of languages, the languages about to die, the causes of death of a language, reconstruction of language, the loss of language even after it reaches its linguistic zenith, research and theories by the modern theorists and touches on some topics related to state of different languages of the world.

Diaspora & Trauma Literature (Bilingual) endeavors to approach the yet-to-be definitive genre Diaspora, Diasporic Theory and Literature, bringing home the reality of the refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced and stateless persons across the globe, diaspora as transnationalism or exile, as an apology for internationalism, cultural hybridity through the narratives of immigrant literature.

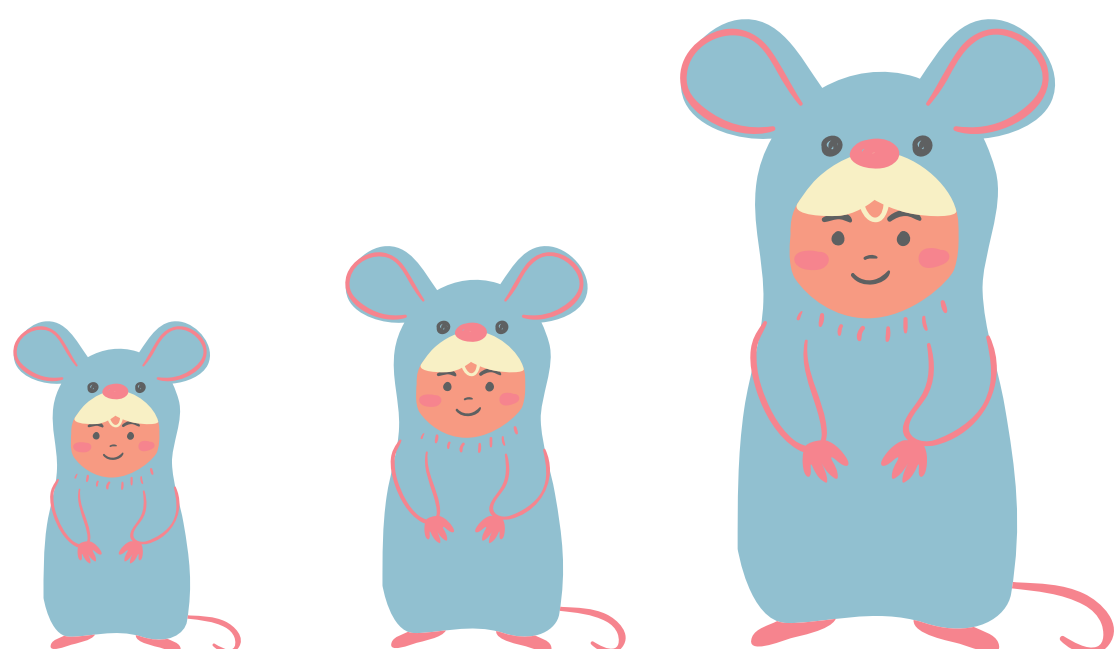
Redefining the Definitions deals with the exponents of the postmodern theories in critical literature intending to emphasize the notions of unitary language, realities of heteroglossia, neo-identity of the writer, word status, literature is without proofs, the innumerable centres of culture, language as a comforting illusion, that are inextricably intertwined with structuralism, semiotics, deconstruction, intertextuality, myth, deep structure, social identity and linguistics conjectured in the 20th century.

Song Offerings and Gitanjali is my tribute to Tagore on the 100th year of winning Nobel prize, an attempt to invest the 'Gitanjali' and 'Song Offerings' of Rabindranath Tagore with some identifiable modern and postmodern literary and critical theories—collaterally, collectively and separately, not only to focus the searchlight of truth upon the dilemma of the transcreating psyche of the poet, the commingling of the classical consciousness, philosophical mysticism and romantic religiosity but also the Aesthete in Tagore, whose spiritual quest hindered least the integral aspect of poetic aestheticism.

In Saraswati (Bilingual) I have moved beyond the two popular names, one of a Goddess and the other, that of a river. The discussion is extended beyond Vedic, mythic and religious references, into Aesthetic, archaeological and anthropological perspectives. The transcendence from a river to a goddess, the significance of references in the Rig Vedas, her relation to river Indus, her status as the noblest among "Mothers, Rivers and Gods and Goddesses", relation to Knowledge, symbol of imagination, creativity and Nada, an inspiration to Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religio-sculptural world from 3rd century B. C. to 16th century A. D.—all throng together in this book.

Glimpses of Indian Languages, my latest book, a 17-year endeavor of mine, involves a glimpse of the languages of India, be they are developing or vigorous, educational or threatened, languages for wider communication, shifting or moribund, nearly extinct, dormant or extinct languages apart from the regular provincial and national languages. Facts and linguistic outline of the scripts, dialects and languages of India, relation between language, culture and the speakers, issues in time past and present with regard to Indian languages, sources and preservation

Apart from these, Reality Rips, published in 2003 from France, was a collection of critical essays on international and national issues and profiles in English, followed by Philosophical and Religious ISMS, also a book on the philosophical ISMS and key terms of the eight major religions of the world. The following 3 of my books are on the recommended lists of colleges and universities in India & abroad: Literary Theories and Criticism, Beyond Modernism (Bilingual) attempts to see through the definitions, judgments and the characteristic features of the literary theories and the critical schools of literature, offering emphasis on the concepts of beauty, aesthetics, modernism, postmodernism, structuralism, meta-narrative, semiotics, deconstruction that have swept the critical consciousness of the 20th century; Literary Essays on Types, Trends and Genres (Bilingual) is a 740-page book on the variety of forms and styles in art and literature; Essentials of English Philology, Phonetics and Linguistics elaborates the essential topics on the history of English language and elemental concepts related to phonetics and linguistics along with English word-derivations supported by charts, tables and diagrams.



Love in Siesta is my only collection of Short Stories. Here are eight stories that intend to capture Time framed by the evolution of human instinct with shades of changing socio-psychic rationale where man-woman relation remains in the pivot—be it in the enlightened dawn after primitivism, or eight thousand years before, or in five thousand B.C., or centuries later in 12th century A.D. or even in the run of the life of contemporaneity.

All the characters in the eight stories are creations of mine but they mostly represent time and instinct. They are all my favourites because sometimes I didn't have control over their feelings and emotions. Presently, I have been working on a period novel set on 4th century B.C.

You have a knack of decoding human psyche with the skill of graphology. Tell us more about it. How and when did you develop an interest in its study?

Apart from being a Professor of Humanities, my father, Late Manab Gangopadhyay was an amateur psychiatrist, helping out people in their stress and suffering, when people were even unaware of the very subject and the discipline in our society. Dream analysis, Colour Test and Graphology were 3 of the most ready-hand available tools to enter into the dark recesses of human psyche. I saw it from my childhood, when my father was trying to implement the graphological techniques in Bangla scripts. Books were too scarce to start with. He taught me from psychological perspective more than the technical knowhow and I started psycho-graphology with intense interest. I understood from my childhood that 'people are not what they are' or 'he/she is what is he/she is not.'

Gradually, reading psychoanalysis and abnormal psychology, and studying people, friends, relatives through graphology first made me too sad. After all, knowledge is suffering. Later, I realized that this is what life is, what people are, and are not what they appear, the quintessence of reality. I practiced it for more than 36 years. Initially, it was a charming game that I always won. Later the very idea of knowing oneself, one's pretense - were difficult to bear, especially of closed ones. Father cautioned me from the beginning about it. So I recovered from such shocks and started helping out without letting one know that he/she is being cured or catharated from a feeling of stress or pang within. One can help silently the society a lot, in personal level, through the knowledge of graphology, apart from having a glimpse of the greatest mystery, the human mind.

Favourite....

Place: Chopta Valley in Uttarakhand, India.

Person: Father, Late Manab Gangopadhyay, Mother, Late Sriparna Gangopadhyay, Elder cousin brother, Late Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay

Food: Bengali Sweets

Beverage: Hot & Cold Coffee

First Love: Music

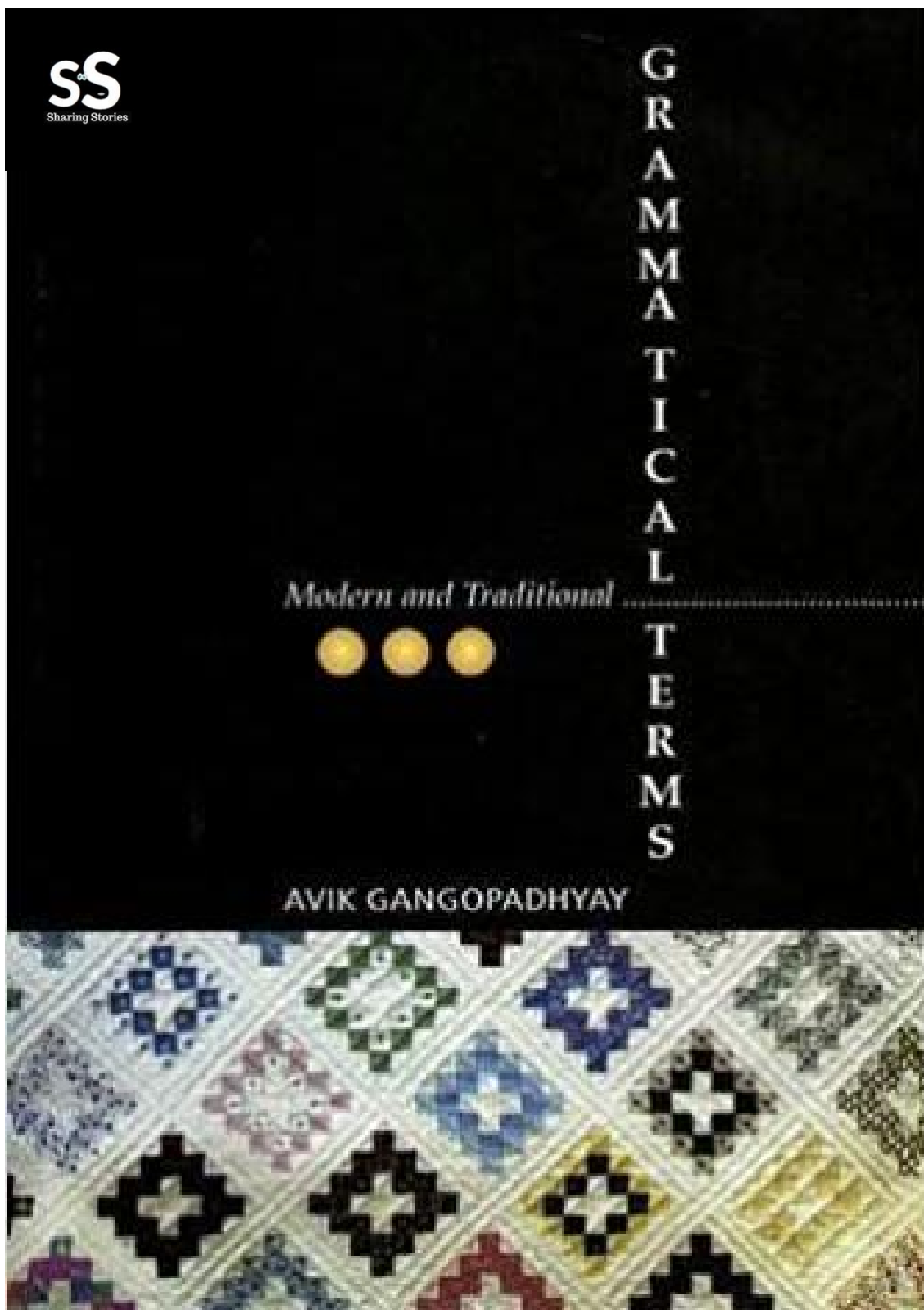
Favourite Quote: ""There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness. When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence." -- Sri Aurobindo"

Favorite character from a book- Very difficult to stick to one: Oedipus (Oedipus, Sophocles), Dr Stockman (An Enemy of the People, Ibsen) Dr Rieux (The Plague, Camus), Nandini (The Red Oleanders, Rabindranath Tagore)

You are more into writing poetry and received accolades for your poetry books too. When was the first time you realized that you are drawn towards writing poetry?

Well it sprouted as spontaneously as leaves come to trees, I mean when in late teens I felt that the excess of feelings needed to be poured into the best words and in the best order. Poetry was the natural choice. I have been known for my objectivity in writing, but only in poetry, even today, I never shield myself. It's private, where I can communicate with me and see myself as someone so close to me but not alike.

I wrote limerick-like poems in Bangla & English apart from serious ones; I translated or rather transcreated poems in French-Bengali, Sanskrit- Bengali, French-Sanskrit, as I was then learning both French and Sanskrit languages. Later I did the same with German-Bangla. I enjoyed lighter moments with languages in my own way. I was much enthused to receive the Editor's Choice Award as a poet from Library of Poetry, USA, in 2002.



Being an editor as well as writer of critical literature, what is the most difficult part of your working process?

My interest in Indian and Western classical music initiated my association with playing sitar and keyboard in my teens but it was interdisciplinary studies that consumed my focus. My long association with psychology, cultural anthropology, philosophy, history, popular science, comparative religion, treasures of antiquity, photography and documentation had shaped both my creative and critical psyche. Voracious as a library lover, I enjoy anything which touches the realm of fineness in human expressions

While writing scripts for Calcutta All India Radio Talks for 2 years I breathed an air of confidence and gradual appreciation led me through.

I am an avid reader of books and treatises on interdisciplinary studies, Aesthetics and Theories of Literature, Language and Criticism, not-so-discussed historical issues, Philosophy and religious 'ISMS', Indological studies, cultural anthropology. In literature alone I venture a lot: from classics to poetic drama, through short stories and poetry of varied genres.

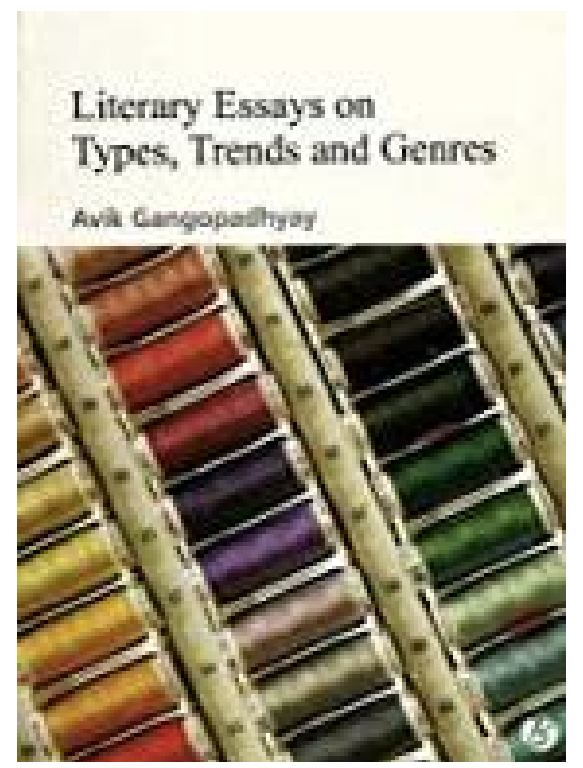
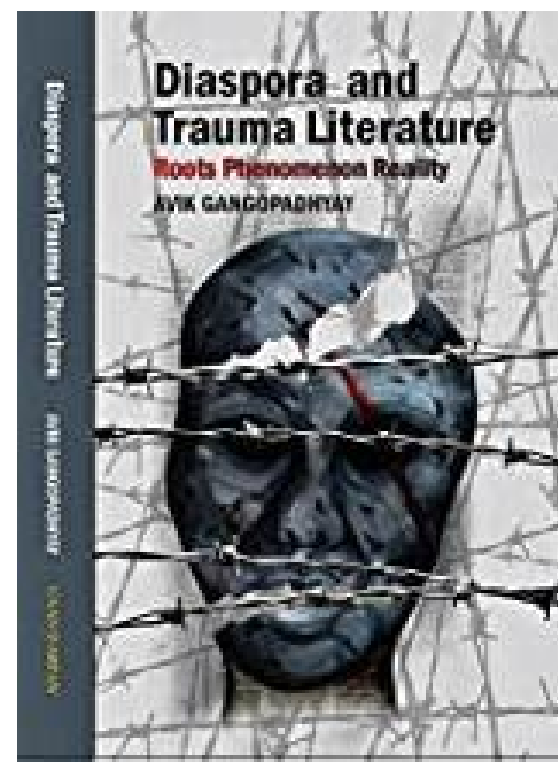
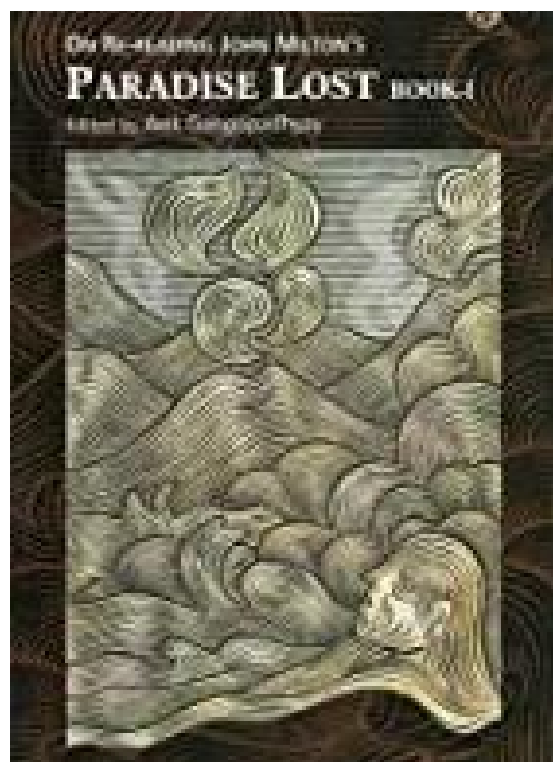
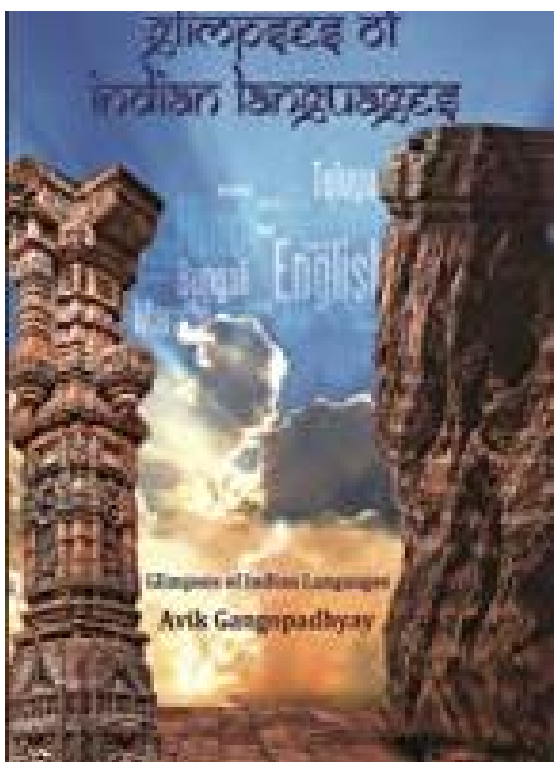
Editing is an objective duty. I add a distanced self to it but work on it passionately. With my own full-length schemes, I always have a conscious focused theme, there are not much space for the concept of matching. Theoretically, I proceed with singleness of aim or purpose or intent. It is a mental mapping and following a psychological trajectory, usually I am used to. Brooding is a process I really enjoy. There is an emotional gratification from the very beginning whenever I am into it. I see my own literary or critical instinct, pass through the transits, test sense of artistry—as if rejoicing in creating a world, first of ideas, then images and then of words. This part is difficult but now I am used to it.

According to you which are the 5 books, everyone should read and also who are your top 3 Authors and what impact they had in your journey as a writer?

I think, there is an easier way to approach this question. One should browse the epics of all civilizations, works by classical, medieval and modern authors -- be it poetry, drama, novel, short stories and a bit of scientific literature for cultural endowment. Everything may not be that charming or interesting but it will create the much needed canvas for the mind.

Too difficult a question dear to name 3 top authors of my preference. Undoubtedly, more than 45 years of reading opened up new vistas of imagination and experience of various cultures across the globe. As I have mentioned, Bengal, my part of the world, has produced a galaxy of class writers in world literature. I am very much born out of it. All the epics of the world, selected Greco-Roman drama, works during the Italian and European Renaissance, late Victorian, modern and postmodern poets, novelists and dramatists across the globe including Asian literature, have had immense influence on my creative and critical bent. My father, late Manab Gangopadhyay, a novelist extraordinaire, known for creating "an idiom of mind," has shaped all that I am and will be.





Tell us a bit about your family, likes and dislikes as a person.

I live in Kolkata along with my wife and son. My life bloomed under the guidance of my father Late Prof. Manab Gangopadhyay noted academician (ex-Reader in Govt. colleges, including, Presidency University, Kolkata), litterateur, critic and philosopher and my mother, Late Sriparna Gangopadhyay, celebrated danseuse and vocalist in the Indian classical tradition, composer of new Ragas, and also singer of Tagore songs. Married to Smt. Swati Gangopadhyay, a vocalist, who adorably renders light classical songs, sings modern and traditional compositions, having 5 music albums to her credit, we are awaiting for a potential bloom in our son, Aaloy Gangopadhyay, a budding Spell Bee Wiz, singer and writer of travelogues.

I strongly dislike exploitation of men and women in any form, domination by the culturally ignorant and mediocre in the society at large and the destructive approach of the so-called intelligentsia towards the vibrant positivity of our land and culture.

I like to remain connected to the great minds – through their works, if not in reality. Writing on post & opinion editorials, book talks, flavoured by my interest in the fields of psychology, philosophy, history, eastern & western classical music, fine arts, ideational treasures of antiquity & postmodernism, that surface in Daily Observer, Daily Mail, The Japan Times, The Connexion, Le Visage, Pembroke Observer, National Post, The Bangladesh Post & The India Observer -- are most enthralling moments that I really cherish.

Could you share a few tips for Young Authors?

How has the study of psychology, cultural anthropology, philosophy, history, popular science, comparative religion, treasures of antiquity, photography and documentation helped you in shaping up your literary career?

Well, the western critics echo that Indian literature is less literary these days. The 21st century themes and linguistic trends will naturally dominate. Conventional plots will wither; themes will be more particular than universal. Modern thinking, feeling, willing will make way. New life styles will bring new treatments and understanding. These have already started happening. Indians have their identifiable narrative style. Own choice of themes too. There is a sea change in approaching art and literature as a whole. It is bound to happen. One cannot arrest changes.

WHAT IF ROUND

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

This is quite strong and a dicey one: May be Books & writing materials, Music, and Food & medicine. Well these days the first two can be had with only internet on a cell.

What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

Erase or replace the chemical responsible in human mind to create strong hatred towards people.

What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do first?

In the present scenario, shall spend on (a) Scientific Research based Institutes & Organizations to invent Eco-friendly substitutes of our daily requirements, be it tools, food supplements; (b) Chain of Healthcare Infrastructure to the roots (c) Job-oriented & Skill-Education Centers

I would only like to say with humility that please don't stop reading. An informed writer is a phenomenon. Both the writers and the readers have to grow, be mature...they too have a duty to elevate their tastes...that too has a process... both have to undergo this journey.

To be an interdisciplinarian is the crux of my intellectual and emotional sojourn. The subjects or topics of my choice, as evident from my titles, would have been impossible from a unipolar approach. For example, photography and documentation made my books on Languages, Diaspora and Indology complete and vibrant. As modern literature and literary criticism are closely interwoven to psychology, cultural anthropology, history, popular science and comparative religion, I needed the background both for the appreciation of literature and become capable to be a postmodern critic.

And to add about my only creative book, Love in Siesta, a collection of short stories, first, it is different, because the eight stories are eight entries into consciousness, eight spots of Time, where Blood whispers. Before head and heart, the instinct replies. Lust is the issue of the blood. The human collective unconscious consists of the primeval instinct, the archetypes. Love in Siesta captures that mysterious human consciousness, aspects and behaviour of Time. Such treatments often factor my stories as 'One of its kind'. Second, my choice of themes show that I cannot be by any chance linked with most of my themes. Here are eight stories that intend to capture Time framed by the evolution of human instinct with shades of changing socio-psychic rationale where man-woman relation remains in the pivot—be it in the enlightened dawn after primitivism, or eight thousand years before, or in five thousand B.C., or centuries later in 12th century A.D. or even in the run of the life of contemporaneity. As an objective artist, I cannot be there. I created the characters and situation in a time scale and let them ripe. Without knowledge of psychology, archeology, cultural-anthropology and history, I don't think, I could have ever imagined the frames of the unseen primitive past.

At Sharing Stories, we have an ongoing campaign 'World Harmony through Writing' where we encourage writers to pen down their deepest internal thoughts, daily for at least fifteen minutes. Their new ideas and profound thinking shall help to bring out some positive changes in the world we live. We would love to hear you thoughts about this initiative. Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice?

I bow and applaud your campaign 'World Harmony through Writing.' Writing itself needs to collect the 'parts' in oneself, one also have to find one's own method of assembling those parts into a shiny piece of content. And what's more, creativity means stepping into the unknown. The outcome may be a little uncertain or completely shrouded in mist. Writing is both thinking and communication. It is communicating with clarity and is a creative process.

And when the concept of harmony frames it, balance, coherence, consonance, proportion, symmetry and above all orchestration, the simultaneous combination of tones, get into it, all blend into chords, pleasing to the ear of the soul.

Well, writing is more psychological than spiritual. Through psychological purgation spiritual awakening paves in. Writing becomes a gateway to many into spiritual consciousness, just like to some musicians, music dawns their Nada within, enabling a spiritual serenity in temper and tone.



AUTHOR & MIRROR MAN PIYUSH GOEL

Coming from a Mechanical Engineering background, how did you embark on a writing journey?

When I was a child I first wanted to become a pilot, then a professor but I ended up being Mech Engg. I do not regret that though. And writing gives me pleasure so a person always finds a way to do what gives him pleasure.

You are referred as ' Mirror Image Man" in media. Tell us a bit about your amazing skill of writing Mirror Image Book. How did you acquire that art?

It is long back story of 1987, one day while I was sitting with my friends one of them all of a sudden asked me Piyush you can do something strange to the World. I asked him what did he mean then he said you can do it. That is where it all started. Practice a lot in Small English letters then In Hindi Language and in 2003 I started writing Bhagwad Gita in Hindi and English and the journey of writing in Mirror Image started.

How many mirror image books have you written? What is the most difficult part of this unique form of writing?

By now I have completed 16 books with hand. Everything appears hard when you try something new but at the time of completing it a lot satisfaction is there. Books are written with different Objects like Pen, Needle, Mehndi Cone, Iron Nail, Wooden Pen, Carbon Paper, Fabric Cone Liner and very happy to say have you ever heard a book written with Gum and Glue.



You have set a record of writing first Needle Book in the world. Please let the readers know more about it.

Really it was great moment when I got World Record for World First Hand Write Needle Book Madhushala.

If not a writer and poet, what would have been in life? Where do you see yourself as a writer in next five years?

Most probably a Business Man or in a best seller List.

According to you which are the 5 books, everyone should read and also who are your top 3 Authors and what impact they had in your journey as a writer?

I think 5 books everyone should read are Bhagwad Gita, Madhushala, Gitanjali, Panchtantra. Writers like Prem Chand, Rabindranath Tagore and Harivansh Rai Bachchan have inspired me a lot.

Tell us a bit about your family, likes and dislikes as a person.

It is God Blessings, I am living with my parents. In family we are three brothers and one sister. In my family, I, my wife, elder son (Software Engg), daughter-in-law (MBA in Finance and Hr) younger Son (Business) and daughter (B.A.French Language), all are cooperative and love each other.

Could you share a few tips for Young Authors?

Of course keep in mind a completion date always try to finish within this time frame 100, and at last would like to say always keep pen and paper with you. Ideas can strike all of a sudden.

At Sharing Stories, we have an ongoing campaign 'World Harmony through Writing' where we encourage writers to pen down their deepest internal thoughts, daily for at least fifteen minutes. Their new ideas and profound thinking shall help to bring out some positive changes in the world we live. We would love to hear you thoughts about this initiative. Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice?

Yes, of course keep in mind a completion date always try to finish within this time frame 100, and at last would like to say always keep pen and paper with you. Ideas can strike all of a sudden.

WHAT IF ROUND

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

Book(Autobiography), Book(Biography) and Books(Fiction and Non Fiction).

What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

Corruption

What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do ?

Work for Poor.



RAPID FIRE

Favourite....

Place: Muzaffarnagar

Person: Mother and Father

Food: Veg Pulao

Beverage: Coffee

Your other Talents: Mathematics, Cartoon, Caricature and Cricket Umpiring

First Love: Reading & Writing

Favourite Quote: "Patience and Passion Count the Fishes."

Favorite character from a book- Chacha Chaudhary and Sabu.

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AUTHOR

KOSHA SHAH CHANDERIA

“Sometimes, we do not get a chance to thank each one who has helped us in our Journey.”

Let the readers get a chance to know about all the important people who have played a part in this ‘Author Journey of Yours’.

First myself for being introvert and expressing through words, society for their views which I observe and gives my thoughts a titiliating feeling my family parents for inculcating habit of reading and providing material, my friends, mentors throughout life, my husband Brijesh my daughter Mysha, my chachu, my friend support Rajesh, Rupal Ashwani and yashi

Tell us a bit about the books you have written. Who is your favorite genre when it comes to writing?

Chaos Theos and Kosmos Book is universe (Cosmos) of thoughts, birthed through Chaos of the tides of words and thoughts, which leads to conclusion with one's own self.

It contains various articles picked up from my extempore write-ups about thought provoking various aspects of life, Subjects related to human relations , love making, care, hope, menstruation, women, money, scar, father daughter relation, barbarism, God and Worshipping, freedom, courage, break up in friendship etc.

Incidences and habits of people which sum up to happy and sad moments of life are penned in this book. The topics are such which will compel the reader to think other side of general view, which people will agree with the view and have soul connection, but due to societal norms or non-acceptance they don't have courage to voice it.

This book is talk to self-more than reading, providing strength to your raw thoughts. The book breaks stereotypes at many levels and questions ‘settlement’ as being related to ‘fixedness’. Fresh breeze of every kind of emotion is felt while reading and pondering over the book Some change in thought process has to be started at some point. I have tried to titiliate that thought process in the mind of readers.



Are you working on anything at the present you would like to share with your readers about?

Yes, would love to share. Coming up with coffee table book about real life incidences and stories about me and my daughter.

If not an author, what you would have been?

Where do you see yourself as a writer five years from now?

Five years from now would see Kosmos still writing and reading, but honestly Kosmos brand to be known in different countries and myself as moderator too hosting many events and interviews

According to you which are the 5 books, everyone should read and also who are your top 3 Authors and what impact they had in your journey as a writer?

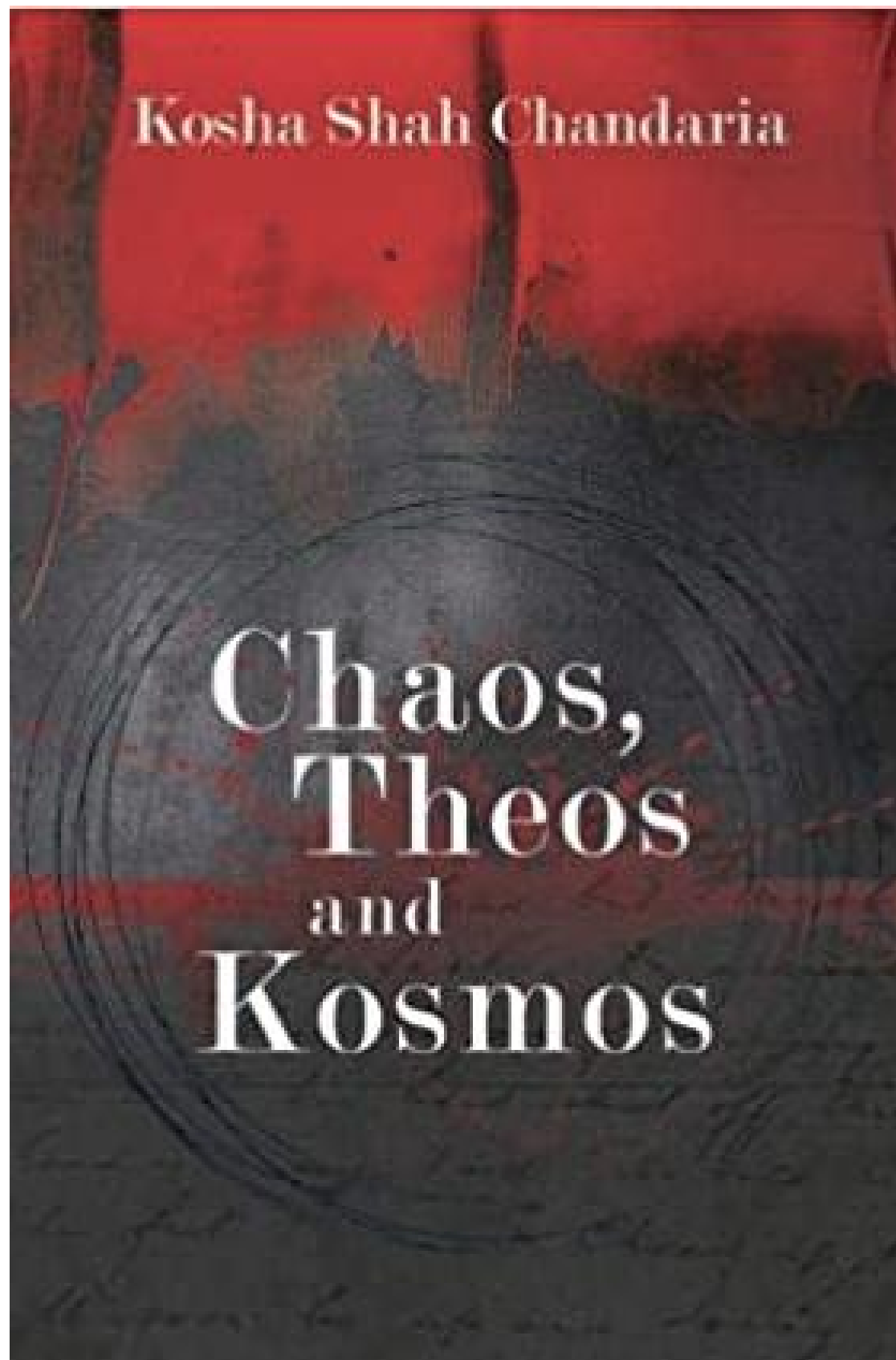
Its personal choice of readers...I learn from every author something but love to read Harlen Coben, Daniele Steel and John Grisham. They have simple yet impactful writing. Reading books of any authors made my writing journey smooth.

Could you share a few tips for Young Authors?

Just read and write your heart. Have your flow and style of writing, don't follow anyone, while learn something from everyone

At Sharing Stories, we have an ongoing campaign 'World Harmony through Writing' where we encourage writers to pen down their deepest internal thoughts, daily for at least fifteen minutes. Their new ideas and profound thinking shall help to bring out some positive changes in the world we live. We would love to hear you thoughts about this initiative. Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice?

Wonderful, virtuous initiative. Any kind of writing and reading will have impact on your thoughts and connect you well with your core. Writing is spiritual, emotional practice to see your soul under veil.



WHAT IF ROUND

There can be 2 answers one true and one honest

What if you had to live with only three things all your life, what would the three things be?

True: A Cell to read and write, clothes, money

Honest: Money sex and entertainment

What if you were given the power to change one thing from this world, what would you change?

Effect of cancer. Change the death of my father

What if you had all the money in this world, what would you do first?

True : Give a part from it to others so that I can start venturing again to earn it.

Honest : Use it to buy all the clothes in the world

RAPID FIRE

Favourite....

Place: Home.

Person: Me

Food: Salads

Beverage: Coffee

Your other Talents: reading, speaking, designing events, moderating events, public speaking.

First Love: have long excel list

Favourite Quote: "Listen to all, follow no one"

Favorite character from a book- Not any in particular but Noddy and chach chaudhary

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#100wordsquills



HIPPU SALK
KRISTLE NATHAN

#ButterflyDance

We went for a weekend trip to a village famous for fireflies. Unfortunately, there was heavy rain in early evening hours of that day. The villagers had already warned that a downpour at a wrong time might act a spoilt sport and fireflies would not come out.

Disappointed, as we lied in our tents, we witnessed a star-lit sky. Being in caged apartment city life for years we had hardly witnessed open sky since ages, let alone sleep under it. We missed fireflies, but not the starry sky they seem to squeeze into a patch of darkness on the land.

That innocent face!

The news of an impending tornado made us leave the office an hour early. Huffing and puffing I reached the platform and took the first train to Lucis Park. I had to practically squeeze myself inside the packed compartment. Each face looked tensed. All in a hurry to reach home safe, except for that one young child, who looked as cool as a cucumber.

The lady sitting next to her kept tapping her feet nervously. "Mom, what makes you worry so much?" She asked her innocently. That moment it dawned on me, 'Ignorance is indeed bliss!'

I got down smiling.

VIJETA
HARISHANKAR



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#GratitudeinLockdownDays and #HealingthroughWords

AFTD Quill

Aahana was born and brought up in an orthodox Indian family, where rules differ based on gender. She had a younger brother Aryan who was apparently the wanted one.

Aryan was always the apple of her parents' eyes, as is usually the case in such families. Aryan was a free independent bird Aahana was always told to listen to her parents and kiddo brother. Just like an obedient child Aahana lived precisely how her parents told her to without any questions.

She always hoped for a day when she will make a way in their hearts. She tried hard but only to get disappointments.

Time flew by, and Aahana had already learned to come to terms with her life. She could feel a fire of protest inside her. A fire her existence to her parents, a fire to prove to the world that gender does not describe the worth of human beings.

She came from a small town where there were rules set for women. Rules which had to be followed by all females without any questions. The rebel in Aahana often instigated Aahana to flee away, breaking all the barriers but for her parents.

She could never gather the courage to run away from reality since she was scared of her own failures. She was scared that she might have a life that can be even worse than her present. Her desires were conquered by her fear of failure.

Still, she wanted to stand out of those average women in the town. A mediocre girl who wanted to set an example of courage and determination for other women around her, but she was scared to fail.

One day on her way back home, a billboard caught her attention. She quickly noted down the number. The following day she called the number and unknown to her family and friends Aahana enrolled herself to appear for an entrance for civil aviation. She came out with flying colours. That wasn't enough. She could not convince her parents, who wanted to limit her to the household, to let her become a pilot. Her father was furious about her desire to be into a profession that would require her to dump the salwar kameez and wear skirts or trousers. This would have only brought disgrace to the family.

She was given a choice either to enroll or leave the house. That was a selfish moment for Aahana. She didn't want to let that opportunity slip out of her hands. She was scared of her failure, but she gathered the courage to try. She had nowhere to go but decided to leave the house finally.

Aahana left for Academy in Kolkata with just a few coins in her pocket and travelled without a ticket on the train. At the training center, Aahana was awestruck and realized how badly she wanted to become a pilot. She worked part-time, at times as a teacher, bar-tender, cleaner, and whatever work she could put her hands on to pay for the fees of her academy. Needless to say, she left no stone unturned and was soon achieved her dream to be a pilot.

Her first assignment came when news broke about a flood in a small town of Bihar. Aahana was the part of the rescue team. She wore her uniform, tightened her belt, and donned her helmet proudly on her head as she left for her first mission.

Soon, the skyline could be seen, and she could smell the same fragranced air of her town. It seemed devastated from the skies. Tears rolled down her eyes, but she composed herself as she remembered her duties.

After a struggle of a few hours, she executed the rescue plan in the area. Yet, there was a family stuck in hard to reach zone. It was submerged half under the waters. The water seemed angrier with every passing minute, and she could spot three people struggling to hold on amidst a broken house. It could have been washed off any minute.

Aahana decided to descent the helicopter close enough to reach them, risking her own life. As the co-pilot took controls, she slipped down the rope ladders to rescue the family.

She got up close with 3 people here whom she recognized at once. After all, they were her family. She managed to save her family before the house was washed off. They were united after 5 years. Aahana saw guilt in her parent's eyes. She smiled and thought "Yes I can, and Yes, I did"

SNEHA KEJRIWAL
SARAOGI



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SAY IT WITH AN IDIOM

“MY NECK OF THE WOODS”

The area where I live.

Example of use:

"Let me know next time you're in my neck of the woods and we'll go for a pint"

Interesting fact:

Origin -

A 'neck' could originally be a narrow stretch of wood, pasture or marsh, for example. This then evolved to refer to a settlement in a wooded country and then more generally to a neighbourhood.

Source: globalgraduates.com

WORDSMITH'S CORNER

APPLE-KNOCKER

Meaning

: Oxford Dictionary defines apple-knocker as "an unsophisticated person" and Merriam Webster states it simply as "rustic."

Word Origin

Its origin as being between 1910 and 1920, A country bumpkin. One of the many terms that city slickers applied to less sophisticated rural dwellers ("rube," "hayseed," and "Gomer" are others). The phrase came from fruit harvesters using long sticks to dislodge the hanging crop."

Example Of usage:

'The apple-knockers have been transgressing all bounds of decency by looting national wealth.'

Source: www.lexico.com

NOT AT THE COST OF SELF-RESPECT

BY ZAHABIA UJJAINWALA

"Savitri did you check with the florist? At what time will he deliver those flowers?" Maya yelled from her bedroom inquiring with her house help.

"Ah the exquisite dried lavenders accompanying splendid white lilies in the vase will beautify my banquet tables perfectly." She mumbled in excitement.

Maya was throwing a grand first birthday party of her grandson in the evening. It was going to be a posh, sophisticated and rich affair. Everything in order and up to date with a theme of grey and the hues of purple. A birthday party of any prince whose worth was not less than any kohinoor. After all he was the first child and probably the last of her family. Nisha, her daughter in law, had given her the lamp of the kin after ten years of marriage. So he had to be an extra pampered apple of everybody's eyes.

"Oh Savitri look at this, my sari is all crumpled.

Didn't you check with the laundry guy properly? See how sloppily he ironed such elegant wear." Maya came towards the living room in anger. "Now don't stare like a dumb. Just iron this nicely and get it to me. Good for nothing girl." The poor girl quickly grabbed her sari and got to work.

Savitri was a cook of the house. Irrespective of her designation she was compelled to do other chores as well apart from cooking. Her haughty Maya memsaab was obsessed with perfection and punctuality.

Savitri was a school dropout. She didn't own any graduate degree that could fetch her a desk job in the office. With minimal education as 10th passed and excellent culinary skills she had taken a job as a cook. She was also a master in stitching. This talent of hers got her some professional work of sewing all kinds of clothes and bags. She was a mother of a one year old and her husband worked as a peon in a private firm. Both of them worked hard to meet both the ends of the house.

Nisha, her daughter in law, was a subtle and wise woman. She was seeing and listening to everything and felt bad about it but didn't have the guts to speak in front of her shrewd and class conscious mom in law. She just looked at Savitri with apology.

"Ohho beta, why are you standing there in a corner? My sweetie pie thank you so much for giving me such a cute pumpkin. Come let's go to my room. I will show you the pearl necklace that I ordered from Amazon. I received it yesterday, wanted to show you last night but you and Aakash were very tired after returning from the office." Maya said with enthusiasm.

"That's okay mom." Nisha replied softly.

"By the way how was the fashion show? Did the clients get impressed with your designs and fabric? I am sure they must be mesmerised by your work. My daughter is a real show stopper." Maya grinned.

"Yes maa the show was a super hit! Everybody loved my work. Got credits and appreciation from Aakash as well" She blushed.

"I am so happy for you and my son. He is very loyal and dedicated towards his work. His chairmanship is my pride. Both of you work so smart and hard in the business to keep our company Orchids' name on top. Your dad must also be glad and admiring your achievements from heaven." Maya's eyes beamed with joy.

As both of them headed towards the room, Maya again ordered Savitri for the two cups of coffee.

Finally the most awaited evening had risen. The luxurious banquet hall was gleaming with silver lights, scented with flowers and being graced with the presence of esteemed guests. Maya was flaunting her crisp linen lavender saree with serene pearls. She looked like an epitome of splendour. Decked up in the smooth satin mauve coloured gown, Nisha was drop dead gorgeous. Akash, smitten by her charm could not take his eyes off his queen. Dark grey armani suit complemented his chiseled body. As the handsome guy was exchanging glances with his girl, they heard some hassle. Maya's orders

"Not again mom." Aakash cringed inwardly about her mom's arrogance and 'me superior' behaviour. He was a generous man. The kindness was inherited from his late benevolent father.

"So let's rock and roll with Arav, the birthday boy! Party begins with our majestic magician. Let's welcome Merlin uncle with a big round of applause.." Arav's jovial and stylish masi made an announcement.

The hall was reverberating with laughter and joy. The amazing tricks kept the audience hooked. Music, dance and games were all fun. There came a moment of cake cutting and expensive presents. Sight of a huge three tier cake was breathtaking. The toothsome cake was gorgeously frosted with flowers, violets and blue bells.

Arav the star of the evening, a bit cranky kid blew the candle with his parents. It seemed cuteness overloaded. He looked cutest in his bow tie striped purplish grey t-shirt and white shorts.

As the grand party was in progress, Savitri was lost in her own thoughts. Her son Sharad shared the birthday with Arav. He too turned one that day.

"What a coincidence!" She smiled.

Sharad was enjoying the party to the fullest. She was staring at her little one with glee but at the same time her eyes were moist.

"Life would be so lovely if my son would also get these luxuries and pleasures. He is deprived of so many delights and good things. I wish, I could provide him with all the well-being that he also deserves."

An abrupt loud music broke her reverie.

"Nevertheless, I will also celebrate my boy's birthday tomorrow morning, gathering his few friends from the chawl with whatever resources I have as it will be too late tonight. I will make children's Sunday a funday." She promised herself.

After the rounds of scrumptious starters, appetizers and fresh juices, it was a time for elaborated delectable dinner. As the guests were relishing the aromatic buffet, the hosts distributed return gifts among the kids.

Savitri got occupied in helping the family, when she slightly heard her Maya memsaab instructing to the waiters, "don't throw the leftovers of plates in the bin, why waste food, gather these and serve nicely mixing with fresh ones to all maids and helpers. These people don't mind, in fact they are accustomed to it."

Savitri was deeply hurt, her eyes welled. She immediately decided to leave. On observing all this nuisance Aakash and Nisha swiftly went towards her.

"I am extremely sorry. I feel so regretful about Maa's ruthlessness. Please wait and have dinner with us." Nisha requested.

"Bhabhi I am no more hungry. I understand your and bhaiya's plight. Please don't apologise. Now I need to leave, I am getting late. Anyway your guests are also slowly leaving so there is not much work for me now." Informing Nisha she left the banquet hall with a heavy heart.

Aakash glared at his mom sternly. His mom got uncomfortable and a little panicked, thinking what could be the matter..

The hall had been vacant now, only a few close relatives were present there.

Maya could no longer hold her anxiousness. She inquired with her son the reason for his rage.

"Ah mom it was alright for your elite friends to discard the food from the plate. That wasn't a wastage right?"

A simple question was enough to answer her conceitedness.

Aakash, Nisha and Arav drove to Savitri's house.

"Bhaiya and bhabhi, Arav baba all of you at this hour?" Savitri and her husband were bewildered.

She was pleasantly surprised to see her employers. They always treated her with humility and dignity, so her jubilation to see them at her house was obvious.

"Won't you invite us inside?" Aakash asked jokingly.

"Oh yes why not?" Savitri was elated but a bit hesitant.

They walked inside.

"We are here to wish and celebrate your little Sharad's birthday!" Nisha exclaimed.

"This chocolate truffle cake is specially for Sharad. Since it is a weekend, our favourite bakery Whisk and Whip was open even at 11pm." She went on saying..

And somebody knocked at the door. There was a delivery boy from Swiggy. A delicious biryani was waiting to be devoured. All of them had a great time together.

Savitri couldn't thank the couple more for their kind behaviour and respect they gave her.

Before leaving her house Aakash said, "Tomorrow onwards you are not supposed to come home. Rest adequately as it is Sunday. From Monday you will join our fashion house Orchids and work as seamstress under the team of our fashion designer Mrs.Nisha Aakash."

"You play well with thread and needle isn't it?"

Nisha winked.

They also sponsored her a part time diploma in fashion designing to enhance her skill further.

"Yes ma'am I will be privileged to learn from you and join your team! Savitri was overwhelmed.



Bhanubhai Patel

Author & Educationalist

Your journey of becoming an author is full of twists and turns. What was that focal point in your life which made you think about writing a book?

My life was and is full of twists and turns, ups and downs that made me to share my wide and vast experiences with readers. In most downside experience, I had to go to the prison and in most upside experience I have established a world record in education in the prison. A number of individuals who came in contact with me and became aware of the fact of my educational achievement rejoined the study in life, and those who were studying, have joined another courses with their ongoing study. Seeing so much curiosity and enthusiasm of the people in study, I was compelled to write this book so that more and more people would know about my achievement.

The main focal point of writing this book and putting it before my readers is to inspire, motivate, enthused, and verve to them through this book to achieve and accomplish their goals, aim, and targets even in any adverse and difficult time, situations and circumstances. The desire to be the beacon is the abstract of this book

Tell us a bit about the books you have written. What were the difficulties you faced during the whole process of writing the book and publishing it?

In this book, I have shared my educational journey to world record in education in Indian prison. My school and college life because I had also experienced many ups and downs in schools and colleges. I also shared my prison experience and how I completed 31 Degrees, PG Diplomas, Diplomas And Certificates Courses in the very uncomfortable, inconvenient, most adverse and indifferent atmosphere of the prison keeping my physical and mental health intact.

As soon as I was released from the prison I made my mind to write a book, but due to my full time job at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, and simultaneously I was also studying different educational courses so I couldn't find time. But when I retired from my job in February 2020, it was followed by Corona lockdown, so I took the advantage of that peaceful time to write this book. As far as book publishing is concern, it was very smooth and without any problem.

How much has the real life experiences influenced in the conceptualizing of the book?

This book "BEHIND BARS AND BEYOND" is a memoir so it contains my real life experiences especially my educational journey inside the prison and outside the prison and my prison experience. I have

Many events and facts of my life that I have not told anyone anywhere till now, have been revealed to my readers for the first time here. For which I urge my reader to read and understand it from the heart. It means this book is full of my real life experiences. This unbelievable, unique, unimaginable and experiences compelled me to write this book to share those experiences with my readers to inspire, motivate, enthuse and verve them to achieve and accomplish something unique, unparalleled, astonishing in any adverse, difficult circumstances or situations.

You were a doctor. And then life landed you in unusual circumstances which led you in studying various certified courses from IGNOU. What made you channelize your energy toward this goal of acquiring more than 25 degrees and diplomas? How are you going to use this vast knowledge in your future life?

An unprecedented event happened in my life which landed me into Ahmedabad Central Prison. In the prison, it was great problem how to pass the time. I thought a lot about it. I worked in prison hospital for one year, read most of the books from small prison library. Then I came to know about study centers of various universities and educational institutions functioning in the prison to impart higher education to prisoners. And I decided to study at faster pace to accomplish as many educational courses as possible. I completed 31 Degrees, PG Diplomas, Diplomas and Certificates Courses in just 7 Years. And Established a World Record in education in Indian prison

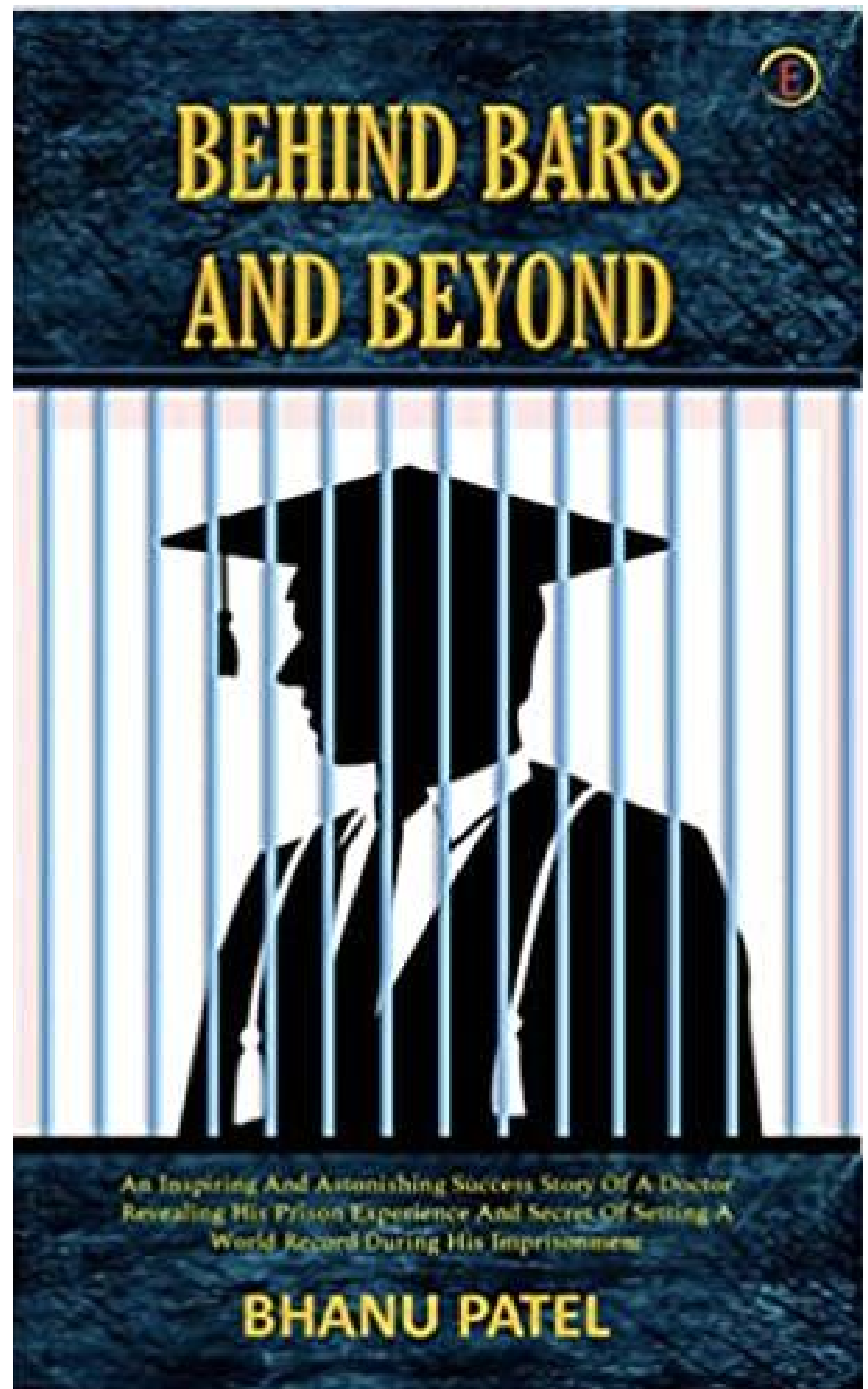
I used my knowledge during my job at university and I motivated and inspired many students. Now, my book will help me in this noble task.

What was the most difficult part of continuing studies as a jail inmate?

Most of most of the prisoners mental condition becomes subnormal or unsound in the prison. So they cannot concentrate on their study in the prison. Mentally, prisoners are suffering more or less from depression, despair, worry, anxiety, and indifference so it is very difficult for prisoners to concentrate on delicate and sensitive activities like education.

Prisoners come from different cultures, regions, religions, ages, castes, and having different crime histories. It just likes the medley type of atmosphere not suitable for study at all. To concentrate the mind on study in an adverse, inconvenient, distracting, and disturbing atmosphere of the prison is very difficult.

In prison, there are no facilities such as professors, subject experts, Counselors, Internet, computer, not even library with educational and academic books. So prisoner students have to rely only on books and study material supplied by university to study and complete the course.



According to you which are the 5 books, everyone should read and also who are your top 3 Authors and what impact they had in your journey as a writer?

- (1) Long Walk to Freedom - by Nelson Mandela.
- (2) The Story of My Experiments with Truth - by Mahatma Gandhi.
- (3) The Diary of a Young Girl - by Anne Frank.
- (4) Chronicles, Vol 1- by Bob Dylan.
- (5) I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings - by Maya Angelou.

Authors

- (1) Nelson Mandela
- (2) Mahatma Gandhi
- (3) Tony Morrison

First and second author had written their autobiography and I read both of them in the prison which inspired me to write my memoir.

Could you share a few tips for younger generation? How to remain focused amidst the most negative situations?

It is very difficult to be and to remain positive in the negative situations or environment. To remain positive one has to train his mind by not following or obeying the mind but making a mind slave to obey and follow his order or command. In my book there is a long chapter titled "The Secret Of My Achievement In The Prison" which explains all about how to concentrate our mind, how to live positive lifestyle in an adverse, boring, indifferent, uncomfortable and inconvenient situation or circumstances.

At Sharing Stories, we have an ongoing campaign 'World Harmony through Writing' where we encourage writers to pen down their deepest internal thoughts, daily for at least fifteen minutes. Their new ideas and profound thinking shall help to bring out some positive changes in the world we live. We would love to hear your thoughts about this initiative. Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice?

Writings can be a Spiritual practice if it is written on spiritual subjects. Because whatever one writes, he has to conceptualize it first and there are so many subjects to write which are connected to social, economic, history, educational professional etc, spirituality is a one of the subjects of writing. I have passed M. Sc. In Value Education and Spirituality. One is free to write on different crimes, antisocial activities, how this writing can be spiritual.

RAPID FIRE

Favourite....

Place: Mount Abu

Person: Narendra Modi

Food: Dal, Chaval, Sabji, Roti

Beverage: Flavoured Milk

First Love: Mighty Existence

Your Other Talents: Counselling, convincing,

Favourite Quote: "Whatever happens, happens for the good"

Favorite character from a book- Mulla Nasruddin from many books of Osho

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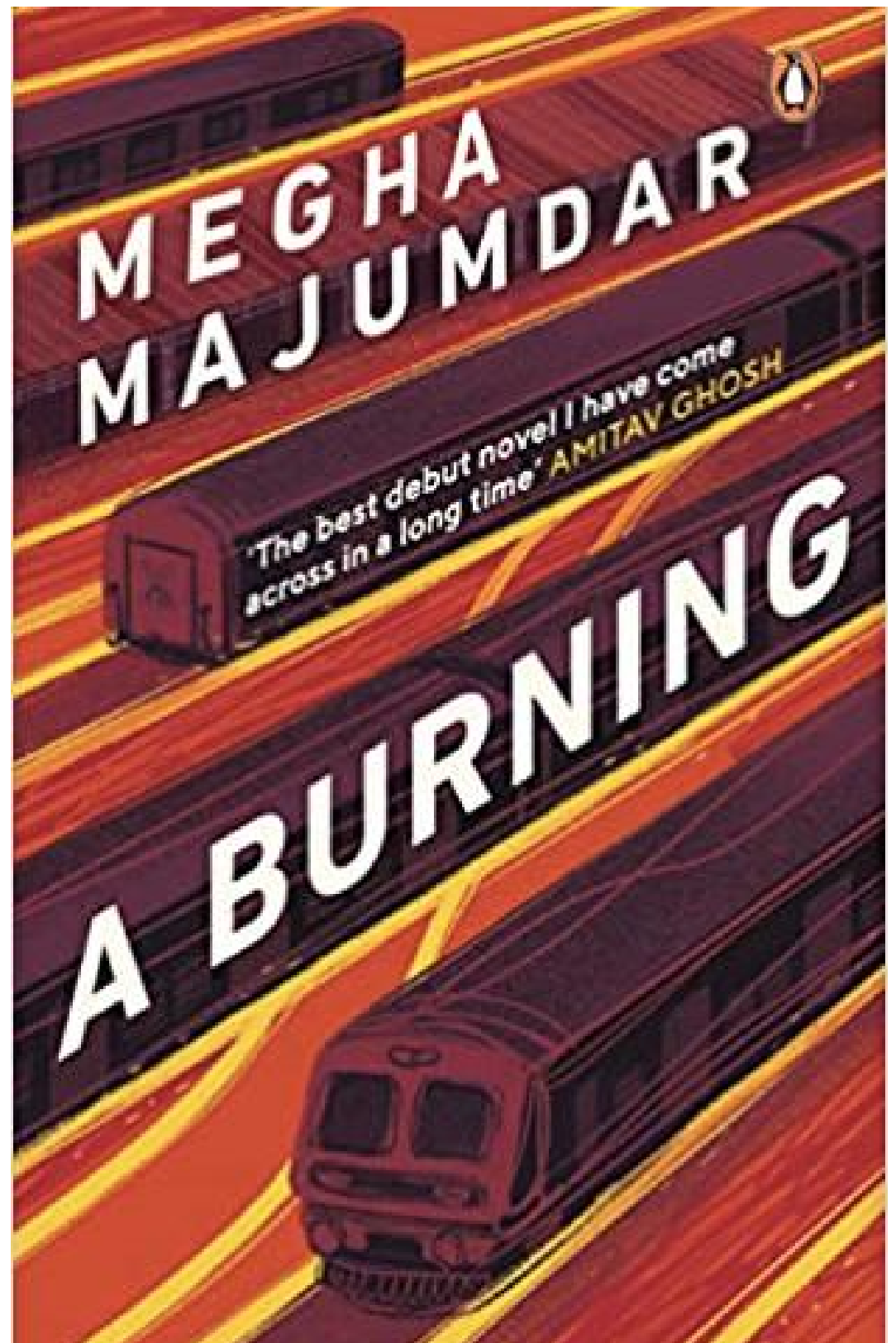
A BURNING BY MEGHA

Political Fiction

The book starts from Jivan's POV. It's a small chapter and nothing of consequence is happening but in that one chapter, the author manages to hold the attention of the reader. The bold use of words and up to the point description is an instant attraction. The problem comes in the second chapter when Lovely's POV is introduced. Lovely is portrayed as a novice to the English language and the entire chapter is written in present continuous tense, which seems fine but with one major flaw. Both Lovely and Jivan have Bengali as their mother tongue. One would wonder why Jivan's POV has a grammatically correct English but Lovely's doesn't, seeing that both their thoughts would be in Bengali, not English. It is understandable that Jivan's speech is in perfect English but Lovely's is not. The author translates Jivan's thoughts and first person narrative into perfect English but not Lovely's, in spite of both of them being Bengali native speakers. A native speaker's inner dialogue and narrative will be Bengali regardless of their fluency in English. Yet there are entire chapters that have been written with an incorrect grammar that not only makes the book a difficult read but also brings down the interest level of the reader.

Coming to the characters, Jivan is a poor Muslim girl living in the slums with her sick father and a hard working mother. Jivan is not a conventional Muslim name and it raises the question of why? One reason is that author is subtly trying to convey that no matter the name, the religion, the birth right, the extremists will always come for some one or the other, there is no end to fanaticism. Jivan's story is just any run of the mill story that daily graces the newspapers and TV channels, by about half of the book, one doesn't know what to expect: a realistic ending or a happy one like in most books. Jivan's emotions, the suffering, the anger is the need of the hour to bring a feeling of empathy into the minds of the readers but all the book offers is a narrative and an insight into her past conveying that her poor circumstances were the cause of her dissent. Jivan's character comes across as underdeveloped as most of her narrative focuses on the chain of events that happen around her and very rarely on how she feels about it. As a result, her desperation doesn't seem desperate enough, her grief in prison doesn't seem sorrowful enough, and her longing for her mother doesn't seem lonely enough.

Lovely's character is different only because it explores the rarest area inculcated in a book; showing the happy side of the transgender community rather than their social suffering, which in a way is great to incite a fondness from within. But this excess positivity makes it hard to believe that a member of a transgender community lacks self-pride to the extent that is portrayed, and brushes away insults aimed at her orientation without a second thought only because she "has heard them all her life".



Blurb

"If the police didn't help ordinary people like you and me, if the police watched them die, doesn't that mean that the government is also a terrorist?" This one comment on Facebook by Jivan gets her embroiled in a terrorist attack investigation which exposes the ugly reality of being an opinionated poor Muslim in an extremist environment. Her two witnesses- PT sir and Lovely could get her acquitted but PT sir swears his allegiance to a right wing party only to realise that his rise comes with Jivan's downfall; Lovely, an outcast, dreams of becoming a star but taking Jivan's side means losing everything she holds dear.

PT sir on the other hand is probably the only character whose story makes sense. The opportunistic nature and the manipulation of a right wing party for their own gains is a scenario we are all too familiar with. But the author has mellowed out the opportunism and greediness of a person who lacks morality to the level that he lets a man get lynched and moves on as if it's a daily scenario. The mentality here is not of egocentricity but a lack of empathy that had to have been highlighted. The characters are under-researched, the pace of the book is so fast that it jumps from one point to another, add to that the lack of deep emotional connection and it's not a book one is reading, it's a newspaper. The book is about the situations Muslims face in an increasingly right wing extremist country, yet there is no acknowledgement of any similarly afflicted Muslim person the author might have spoken to, nor is there any reference to the research by Muslim scholars whose insight could have improved the authenticity of the book. It is for all these reasons that I am extremely confused as to how eminent authors have showered praises about the book all over the media without giving a second thought or maybe they have, who knows?

The saving grace of this book is that it has bravely attempted a political satire and spoken against fanaticism at a time when political satire is suppressed. The effort is commendable and much appreciated. There are some excellent quotes, dialogues, and descriptions that will keep the reader turning pages. The writer boldly attempts to portray the real reasons for politicisation of characters, but remains ineffective and fails to capture the whole picture. It simply offers a superficial rare case scenario of a person whose ego finds balm at a rally and fails to address a deeper mind-set prevalent in society. In short, it's a good one time read owing to the narrative being in first person otherwise, it's no different than what we see, hear, and read every day, everywhere.



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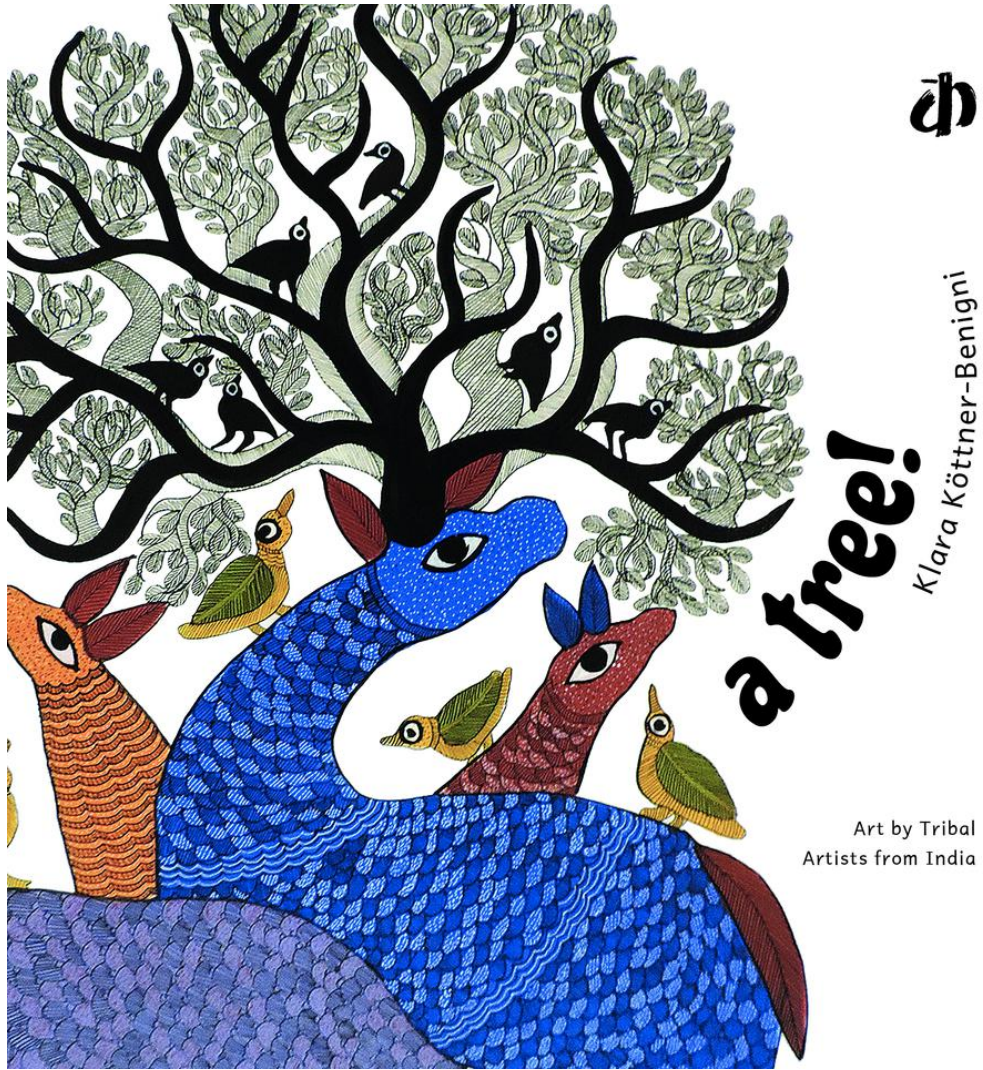
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Art by Tribal Artists from India
Author : Klara Köttner-Benigni



‘A TREE!’

The book ‘A Tree!’ is adapted from the poem by Klara Köttner-Benigni. Klara Köttner-Benigni was an Austrian writer, journalist and conservationist. From her younger days, she had a keen interest in animal welfare and nature conservation.

This book tells us about how the trees are mercilessly cut. Trees not only give us fresh air, but also fruits, shades and are shelter to many birds and animals.

Through the ‘TAADA’ concept of Katha Org, this book asks us to think about why trees are cut and to act upon it to stop cutting of the trees.

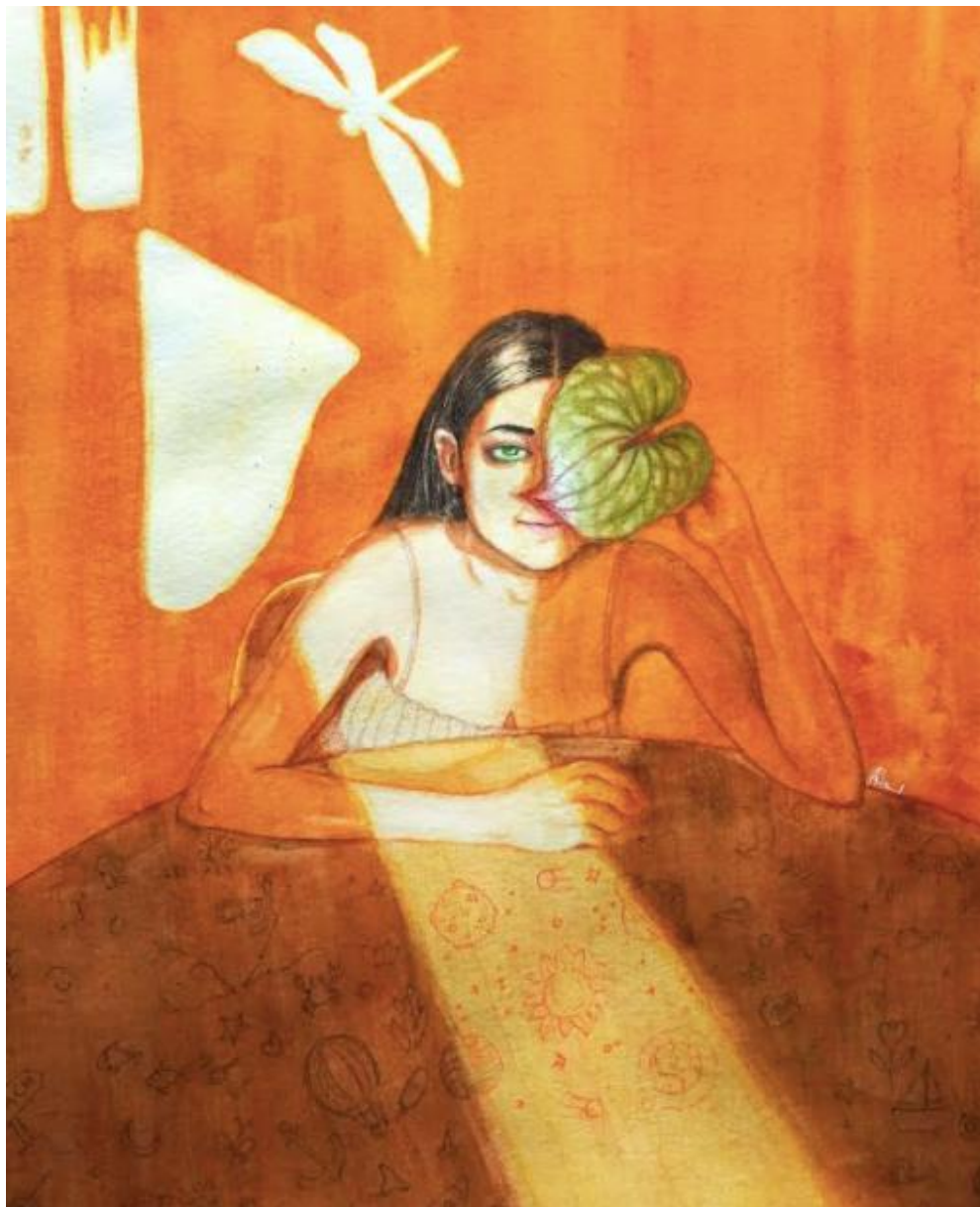
The most beautiful part of the book is the illustrations. They are all done in tribal art like Warli, Kurumb, Gond Art, Bhil Art, and Madhubani paintings by various artists. This book also gives us information about these tribal art forms.

It is a very beautiful and colourful book with a great message. All the children should read such books.

BY YASHAN GAJBE
(9 YEARS OLD)



IGNITE - FROM WITHIN THE CONFINES



“IGNITE-from within the confines-“is a collaboration of 8 artists and 8 poets carefully curated by visual artist-art blogger, Deepa Gopal, currently residing in Dubai who is from Kerala, India. The exhibition brings together art and poetry from different parts of the world in the form of videos with introductions, art, poem recitals and texts through blog, Instagram, YouTube and personal social media handles.

The artists include Ahlam Abbas (Beirut, Lebanon), Anindita Chakraborty (Hyderabad, India), Deepa Gopal (currently in Dubai, from Kerala), Devan Madangaraly (Kerala, India), German Fernandez (currently in Dubai, from Peru), Lauren Rudolph (New York, USA), Liz Ramos-Prado (currently in London, from Peru) and Yamini Mohan (currently in Dubai, from Kerala).

The poets include Ardra Manasi (currently in Manhattan, USA, from Kerala), Ellora Mishra (currently in Hague, from Bhuvaneshwar), Gitanjali Kolanad (Toronto, Canada), Joseph Schreiber (Calgary, Canada), Mini S Menon (Kerala, India), Namratha Varadharajan (Bangalore, India), Radha Gomaty (Kerala, India), Sonia Dogra (Delhi, India).

Each poet is paired with an artist and it’s amusing to see how it ignited new amalgamations, conversations and creative symphonies.

The exhibition focusses on the creativity borne out of this pandemic, our reactions and responses to the current state we are in – restricted, isolated and confined. It is but natural to feel desperate and listless. It could unravel a range of emotions – it could spark a happy thought, mostly dark and then there’s the in-between. It’s a “conversation” of the creatives trying to overcome, find joy, forget, annihilate, reveal and/or excel at their current life and state of matters that they are surrounded by in their daily life. All the same, “Ignite” essentially instills hope. What better time to Ignite than this when we are surrounded by many woes being confined within because of a pandemic unlike anything we have ever seen.

There are diverse and unique voices you can hear in “IGNITE-from within the confines-“

Curator - Deepa Gopal



Did You Know ?

"Some trivia, something serious but always interesting"- brought to you by Chandrika R Krishnan

1. Did you know that National Trivia Day takes place on Friday, January 4

2. The longest wedding veil was longer than 63 football fields.

If you thought Meghan Markle's wedding veil was long, get this: there's a woman in Cyprus who set the Guinness World Record for the longest wedding veil. How long was it, you ask? Nearly 23,000 feet, which is the same length as about 63.5 football fields

3. Did you know that the highest-grossing film of all time without taking inflation into account is Avengers: Endgame .

4. The 100 folds in a chef's hat represent 100 ways to cook an egg.

Yes, that tall, pleated white hat that chefs wear — technically called a toque — has 100 folds for a reason! According to Reclutant Gourmet, the pleats used to signify a chef's level of experience, like the number of ways he or she knew how to prepare eggs.

5. The hashtag symbol is technically called an octothorpe. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the "octo-" prefix refers to the eight points on the popular symbol, but the "thorpe" remains a mystery. One theory claims that it comes from the Old English word for "village," based on the idea that the symbol looks like a village surrounded by eight fields!

6. Some cats are allergic to people.FYI for all you people allergic to cats: they might be allergic to you, too!

7. And for the record, no real astronaut ever uttered "Houston, we have a problem" — Tom Hanks only said that in the movie Apollo 13.

8. Chenab Bridge is the highest rail bridge in the worldNot all of India's famous monuments are religious. The jaw-dropping bridge spanning the Chenab river in Jammu is 1,178 feet above the water. If you're afraid of heights, you might want to skip this one!

9. Home of a mysterious skeleton lake

Located in the Himalayas at about 16,470 feet, the glacial Lake Roopkund has become famous for the human skeletons found in the lake and surrounding areas. It is thought that the skeletons are the remains of people from the 9th century who perished during a severe hail storm.

10. The popular game "Snakes and Ladders" originated in India. It was called Moksha Pattam.

Now sold across the world (sometimes adapted to "shoots and ladders"), this board game traces its roots back to India. It was first created to teach morals and lessons about karma in a way that young children would understand and remember

.....Chandrika R Krishnan



SS

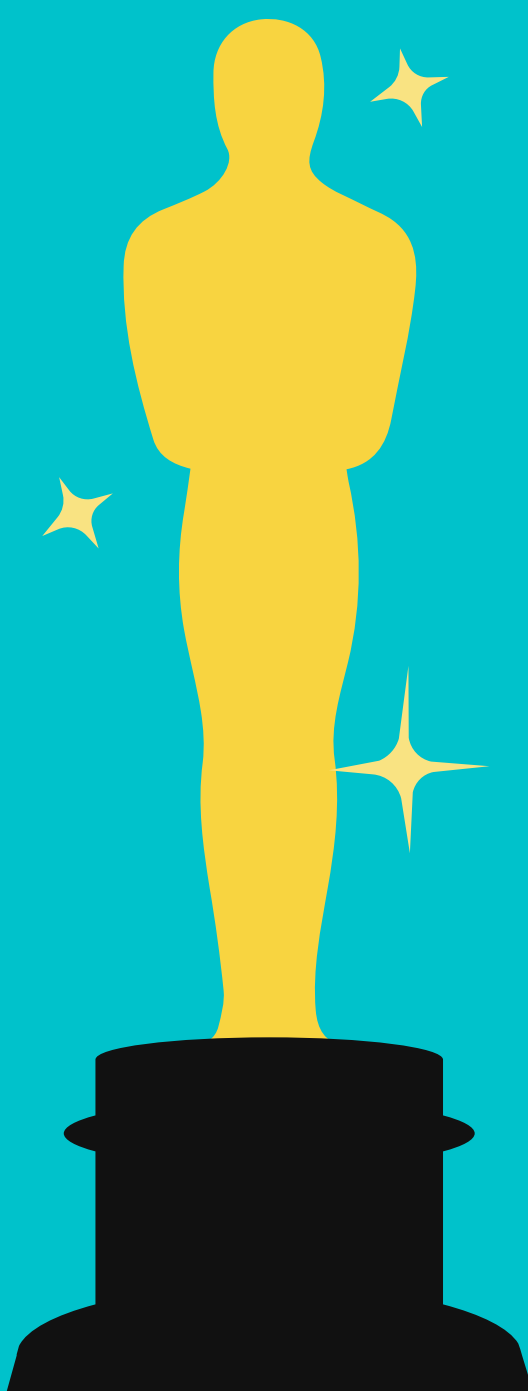
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WRITING CONTESTS SEP'2020

WORD IMPACT

Sudha Viswanath - Winner

Amrita Malik
Jayashree Pillai
Preethi Warriar
Sapna Martin

PICTURE PROMPT POETRY

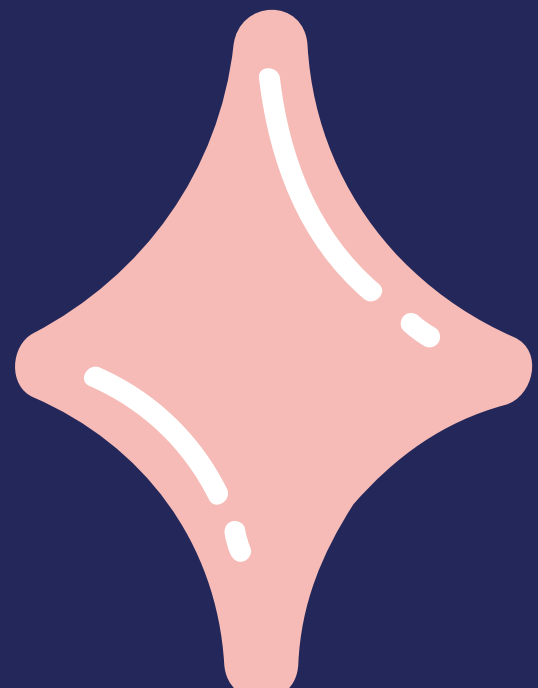
Vasudha Pansare- Winner

Ratna Prabha
Medhini
Chandra Sundeep
Amrita Malik

#1000WORDS TALES

Animesh Sarangi - Winner

Ratna Prabha
Alipi Das
Sudha Viswanath
Afiya Naaz



Music.

'I looked up from my copy writing book and asked, "Ma, how can little drops of water form an ocean?"

Mother was practicing music. Placing down her tanpura, she hugged me.

"Why not?" She smiled.

"Look there are only seven nodes in music," She explained, reciting the nodes , "Sa,Re,Ga,Ma,Pa,Da,Nee....., And music is an ocean formed by these seven nodes.

Awestruck, I stared at her.

Then she broke into a melodious Raga Malligai*, making me understand that with the help of just seven nodes umpteen songs have been composed in various ragas.

What a unique way to understand the adage.



SUDHA VISWANATH

Mrs. Sudha Viswanath, a teacher by profession, took to writing as a hobby. Though she writes short stories, she has also penned a few poetries. Some of her stories and articles have been published in magazines and online.

Picture Prompt Poetry



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*We are surrounded by music,
All through our lives, at every stage.
Lullabies soothe babies and make them sleep,
Little children dance to the tune of rhymes.*

*Youngsters can't live without music,
Romantic couples need music
To express their love and feelings,
The housewife needs music
To soothe her frazzled nerves.*

*There is music in nature,
The rustling of leaves,
The gurgling of brooks,
The songs of birds,
The music of rains.*

*Music is the language of Gods,
It can enlighten and enrich our souls,
It has the power to calm grief,
And give strength to a dying person.*



VASUDHA PANSARE

Vasudha Pansare is a retired Professor of English who believes in enjoying her retirement. Her hobbies are writing poetry, reading a variety of books, watching movies, reviewing books and films and listening to music. She is a member of various reading groups and poetry groups and has won several certificates for her contribution to poetry. She is hoping to publish a book of her poetry.

#1000wordstales

SS

Alien Human

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#1000WordsTales



Situation :

You are the narrator or the main protagonist of the story. You don't belong to this planet Earth. You are here for a small visit or maybe accidentally arrived here through a chain of circumstances. Weave an engaging story around this situation, looking at the happenings around you in this planet Earth. You can build the story around any particular incident, context, happening, or generic life on earth, the people who live here. You can pick any genre of story writing for this topic...the key is, 'Let your imagination soar high'

The Game : Game Over

"Yuhgoluu la (clicks with his tongue twice) medrasali kuku numbasilo!" yelled a green, human look-a-like being, as he rushes to the backside of the console. A red alert starts ringing, a similar kind that you hear standing on Indian crossways. Rather could be called the sound time-lapse of Indian traffic.

Panicking, he runs to every glass display (maybe that was a bit too futuristic or just alien) and aggressively starts typing something on what looks like a keyboard except for the fact that letters were not recognisable alphabets (all that could be understood by the author himself was the sign of alpha, beta and gamma to the left side of the whole keyboard). Nonetheless he crashed on a countryside field.

Yes he is an alien. Yes it was his spaceship. And please, do not ask the reason why he crashed.

I said not to ask. Ahh! Okay okay... (Rolling drums, though it's up to you how do you do that in alien dialect) his engine failed. Mike drop! (Typical drama, though it's not the same ahead).

Getting out, the alien guy turns his language translation on. Suddenly there were all kinds of noises.

Buzz...buzz...buzz, the static buzzing stops when he turns the dial setting for his own com

WINNING ENTRIES

The Alien (as I apparently call him), was one of those space patrol guys who merely had a rough landing. Though not that frequent but there stays an organization that keeps check on the developments around their world. The last time they visited this planet wasn't long before. About time when the mighty dino lizards occupied the whole planet. The sun felt warm and yet not burning. A smile bloomed, widening till the extreme corners of his eyes. That's a hell of a smile (Maybe the same expression you would give when you see a feet and half dangling dick). Reaching out of his spaceship he found a female planetarian unconscious due to the shock of crash.

It was a good omen that at least now no one saw him. For a fact he, being a space patrol police, shouldn't indulge in any activities in the planet that he is overseeing. The reason being to let technological developments advance at the very pace they are supposed to.

Turning around with a relieving sigh, he finds a boy looking at his stupid 100 teeth smiling face. The boy shrinks his face as if he were about to start crying at that horrifying face. Raising his three fingered hands, as if he wanted to stop him from crying, he understood that his fingers aren't familiar to the planetarians as well. He stopped moving his hands and dropped his smile down.

The boy shouted, "Ah! C'mon stop it...stop it. Stop being you." falling down on the ground, he laughed maybe his life's largest and heaviest laugh. "That stupid face of yours! Ahh god I am dying." he continued laughing for the next min and half.

WINNING ENTRIES

The alien got annoyed and came directly down to business. He said, in a mechanical voice, "I am going to delete your memory of me." The boy suddenly got serious and pleaded to roam the world or maybe just sit in his spaceship.

I don't know how aliens are. Maybe mean and all holding a grudge to attack Donald Trump or capture the planet. But this alien was a kind one. He couldn't say no to the boy's requests. Nobody would have said no to an adorable child threatening you with a loaded gun. Moreover this was a good chance to know how people are on this planet(maybe that's what a 700 year old alien would say to himself after being scared from a mere child).

Whispering all the work he was here for, they took off on a short adventure. Adding in, the alien says," This pyramidal structure was made to be the transmitter and receiver of the light waves with which we contacted the people here on Earth. But in time they became old." The boy, not listening, taps all the switches to see how it's like to be on a real spaceship. "I came to replace them with the newly made ones." he went in the great pyramid as if there were a loop hole on the pyramid surface (Nice work architectures of the great pyramid. Maybe you should have considered a humanly way to get in. Explains why the communication with aliens was broken.)

Lightning crackled and the alien got roasted into an Ancho-Scallion. Yeah inside that stupid sand thing. (Round of applause for the architectures.)

Not yet dead somehow, he returns back to the spaceship and starts yelling in his own language to the people, back at his home, who activated the receiver. "Even I didn't know that the light waves are this dangerous here on earth." exclaimed the alien with the same mechanical voice. The boy was least bothered. In this mean time he learned how to shit in alien commodes.

Turning around, yeah the adventure is over, they both came back to the boys place. His mom still unconscious, the stupid alien drops the boy. And clears his memory.

"What the hell man!" yells Jack. "What kind of game is this? Alien comes picks a boy and drops him home! Why is this even a game, where I got to do nothing just sit and see this damn T.V." Stomping towards the main door he hears a screech of his mom outside the main door of this country side old wooden house.

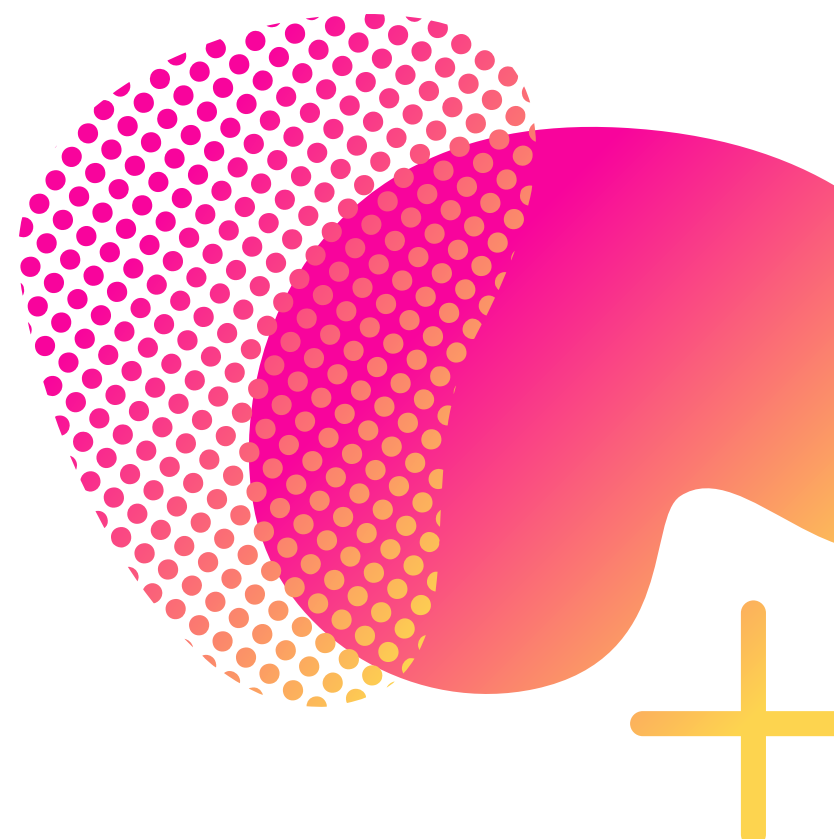
"Maybe a wild animal?" rushes to grip that hanging shotgun with which his dad used to kill animals and humans (that conveys why he is in prison...maybe). A wild animal that stands up on his feet. Jack is already in tears, points the gun towards him, and laughs!

"Ah! C'mon stop it...stop it. Stop being you. That stupid face of yours! Ahh god I am dying." laughed at the 100 teeth smiling face of, you know what, animal.



Animesh Sarangi

Animesh is writer by soul. He finds life in every word thus pens down his heart. He loves to write romance and sci-fi stories. Believing 'poetry' as his soul-mate, he works to become a better writer with every word. An engineer to be, he aims to have a big contribution in gaming. He is a dancer and loves to play football as well.



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1.

Picture Prompt Poetry

Painting Courtesy : Joyita Basak

2.

Word Impact Series

"PROCRASTINATION"

"If it weren't for the last minute, nothing would get done." — Rita Mae Brown

As writers, all of us have been guilty of procrastinating some time or other. Bring on your thoughts on this word with a dash of humor added, in maximum 100 words. The fun element should be present in this write-up of yours.

PS: Don't procrastinate about participating in this contest...do it now! We love to read your take on these prompts!!

3.

#1000

WordsTales

"Dream it today and start living it tomorrow."...

Given a chance to choose a next life, how would you live it? Is there something you want to start afresh, or want to change something about yourself?

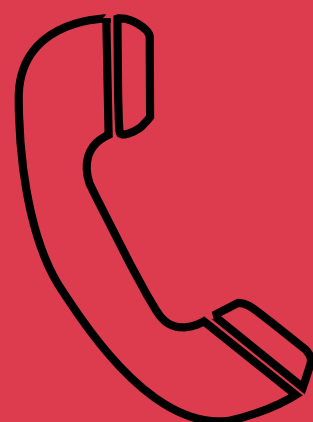
Weave a 1000 words tale around this concept using your creativity. You can spin a personal story about yourself in first person POV or you can throw your protagonist in such unusual circumstances and write the story. You are free to interpret the prompt the way you want to!

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