

# SCIENCE SHORE

exploring the ocean of life

## ONLINE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

VOL 5 | ISSUE 4 | JANUARY 2025

- ▶ SCIENCE ARTICLES
- ▶ SHORT STORIES & ARTICLES
- ▶ POETRY
- ▶ HOBBY & ART
- ▶ AUDIO & VIDEO

*New  
Year  
Edition*

**Spotlight featuring Scientist  
Reach out Initiative**

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# **LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES FROM SCIENCE SHORE**

## **ACHIEVEMENTS:**

**At Science Shore, we love celebrating our members' success.**

**We take immense pride to share the achievement of our esteemed Editor Dr. Sujatha Varadarajan for being awarded with the best thesis Commendation in Science Education 2024 from Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR).**

**Her thesis title: Problem based Learning in Undergraduate Chemistry Laboratories in India.**

**Heartfelt Congratulations to her. Her achievement inspires us!**





She has shared her inspiring words with us:

**"All of those who have earned a doctoral degree know that the journey truly is a transformative process. It inculcates rationale thinking, perseverance, determination and develops you to be humble and remain grounded. However, there are divided views on this, that is the process vs product conflict. Some people want to highlight their designation (Dr.) because they have worked really very hard to acquire it, while some others think, if Phd has not raised you above these materialistic world then of what use it is. I prefer to be with the latter view. What do you think?"**

**-Dr. Sujatha Varadarajan**

**Center Coordinator, Multidisciplinary Curriculum and Pedagogy**

**MSFDA, Pune.**

**We take delight in congratulating Mrs. Setaluri Padmavathi (Our regular esteemed enthusiastic senior poet contributor) for being honored at the World Poetry Meet for her contributions to poetry.**

**She has shared this note: The 43rd World Congress of Poets was hosted by Dr. Setu Kumanan from 20 November to 25 November 2024 at Madurai, Tamilnadu, India. It was a wonderful poetic fest in which many poets participated from India and abroad with great zeal and enthusiasm. The poets were welcomed with great respect and warmth by the organizers and team. The hospitality, food and arrangements were excellent and the platform created togetherness and friendliness among all the delegates, hosts, the team members and audience.**



**We are excited to share the achievement and congratulate our regular esteemed contributor, Ms. Saranya Francis, Assistant Professor, English, St Pauls College, Bangalore. She has been bestowed with The Outstanding Alumni Honour Award from The Christ University, Bangalore.**

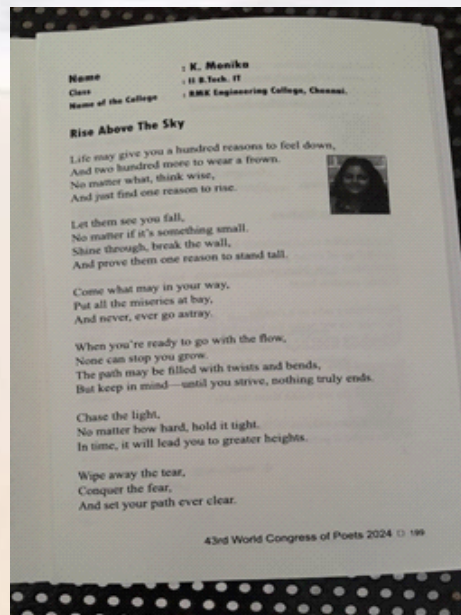


**Hearty Congratulations to our Young talented star contributors  
D. M. Mukundhan and K. Monika.**

**Mukundhan won first place in Elocution at School level and third place at  
Interschool level in Elocution. Topic: Effective communication.**



**Monika's poem was published in 43rd World Congress of Poets 2024.**



**Proud of you Mukundhan and Monika! Rock on. Our best wishes to their future endeavours.**

# **REACH OUT INITIATIVE - EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION: SCIENCE SHORE EXPANSION**

**We are grateful for the opportunities to collaborate. We are happy to share Science Shore is now spread across 3 libraries.**

**This reflects Science Shore dedication and commitment to our passion to enhance our efforts in collaboration for the higher good, showing the positive influence of Science Shore community.**

**It is about spreading and celebrating the spirit of joy of reading and learning to the children and youth making a positive impact in the society.**

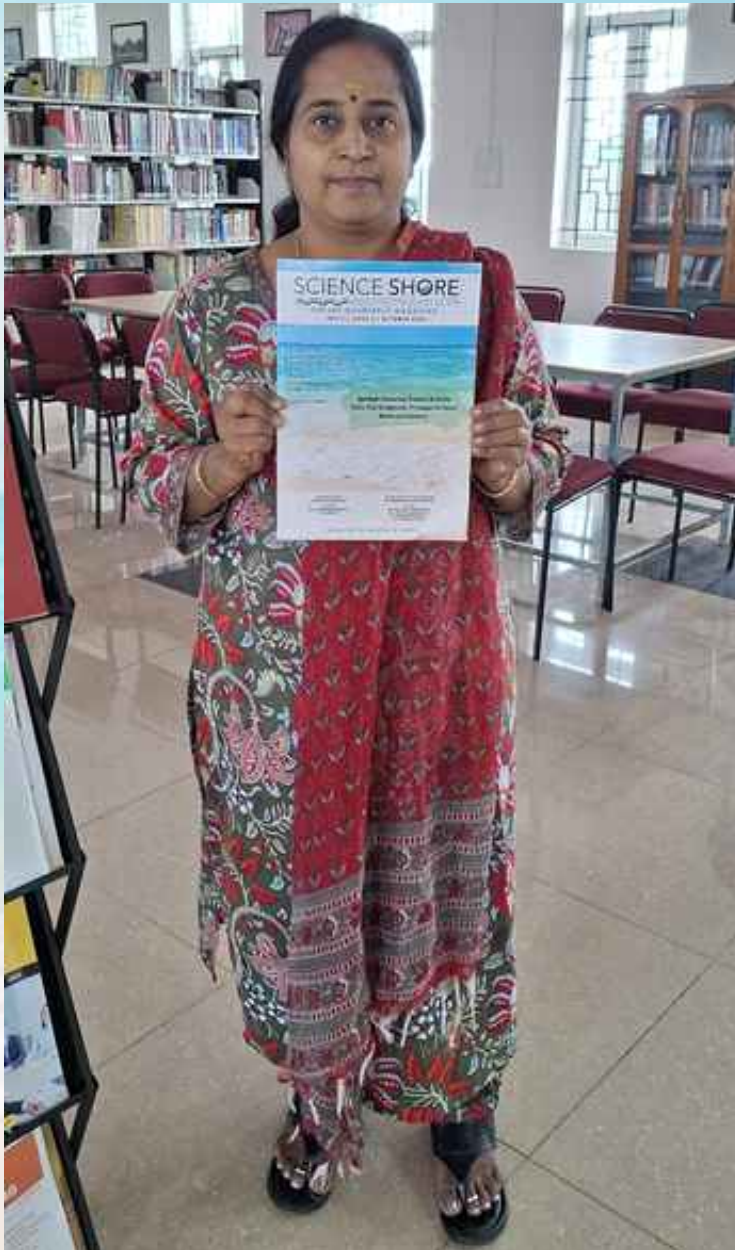
**We are happy we have achieved that purpose. We hope to reach out more in the future.**



**Science Shore enters Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences(SIMATS), Chennai, Library for the social good.**

**Many sincere thanks to Professor Dr. T. Selvankumar, SIMATS, for valuing and supporting our work, including Science Shore in the college library collection and sharing the picture.**

**Dr. T. Selvankumar is a Professor- Research, Department of General Medicine, Saveetha Medical College and Hospital, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Saveetha University, Chennai.**

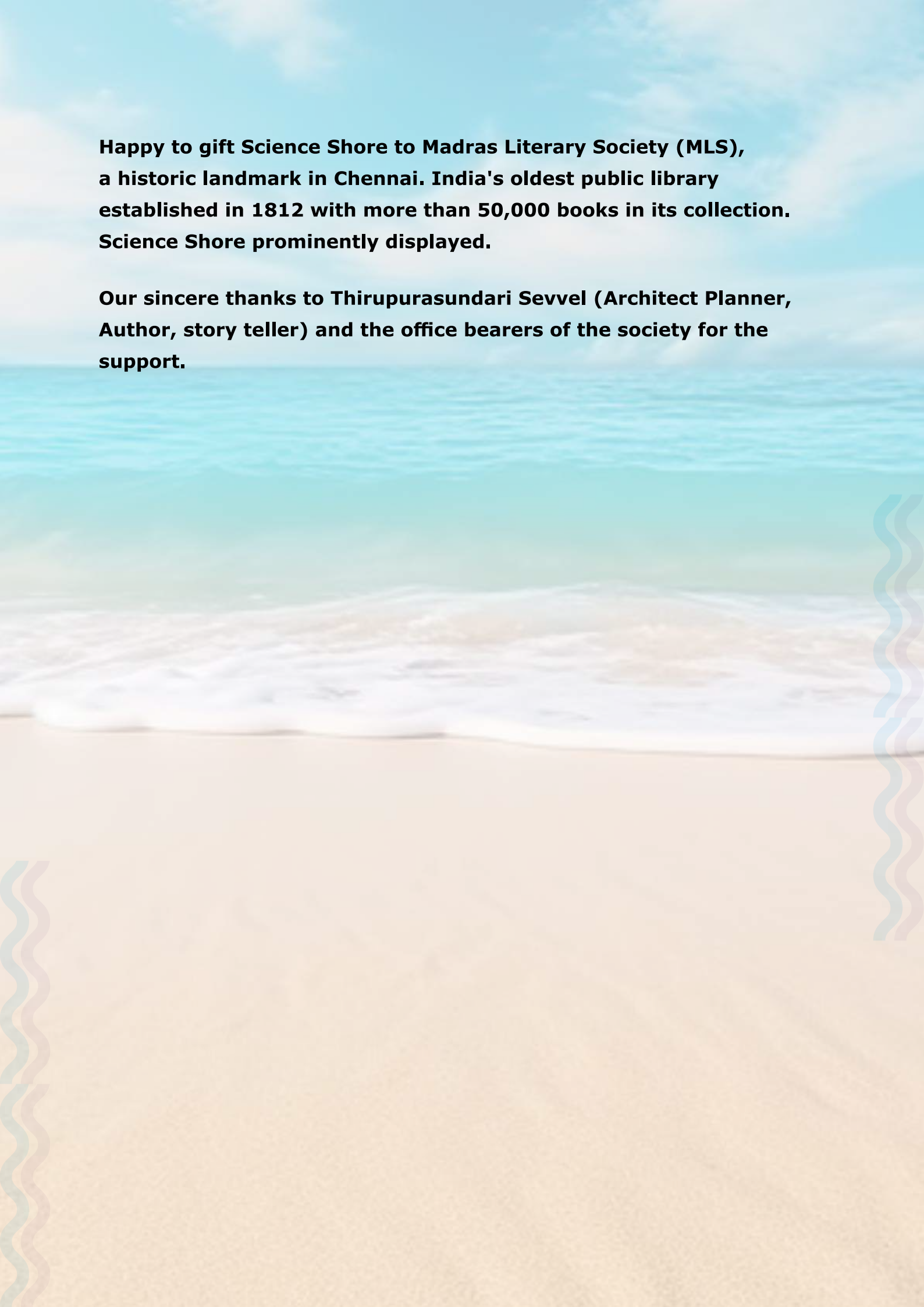


**Science Shore reaches St. Pauls College Library, Bangalore. The institute offers UG and PG programs in various disciplines providing holistic education and inspiring next generation.**

**We thank Ms. Malini (Librarian In-charge, St. Paul's college) for sharing the picture holding Science Shore.**

**Special thanks goes to Saranya Francis, Assistant Professor of English, St. Pauls College, for facilitating this and for her unwavering love and support to Science Shore.**





**Happy to gift Science Shore to Madras Literary Society (MLS), a historic landmark in Chennai. India's oldest public library established in 1812 with more than 50,000 books in its collection. Science Shore prominently displayed.**

**Our sincere thanks to Thirupurasundari Sevvel (Architect Planner, Author, story teller) and the office bearers of the society for the support.**

Explore interesting unique opportunities:

Orbindu Ganga (Consultant, Author, Editor, Poet and Publisher), our regular esteemed contributor invites poets and writers.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS - Poetry Anthology

### PRISM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We are thrilled to announce a call for submissions for the poetry anthology *Prism of Consciousness*. This anthology will accompany the upcoming **VI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE CAESURAE COLLECTIVE SOCIETY**, jointly organised by the **Centre for Indian Arts and Cultural Studies (CIACS)**, **Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Department of English, Cooch Behar College** (affiliated to the university), and **Caesurae Collective Society** in collaboration with **Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai**. The conference will be held from 9-11 April 2025 at Cooch Behar, the erstwhile princely state in West Bengal, India.

The anthology seeks to weave a fabric of poetic expressions that resonate with the theme of consciousness—exploring the mind, the self, and the infinite cosmos—weaving together poetic voices that reflect on what it means to be aware, alive, and interconnected.



### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE CAESURAE COLLECTIVE SOCIETY

Date : 9, 10, & 11 April 2025

Venue : Cooch Behar College

Place : Cooch Behar, the erstwhile princely state in West Bengal, India

### THEME

*Prism of Consciousness—a profound interaction of thought, emotion, and awareness that shapes our experience of reality. We invite poets to explore this theme in all its dimensions.*

### SUBMISSION CONTENT

Poem(s), bio, photo, declaration, and personal information.

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE

10th February 2025.

### BOOK LAUNCH, POETRY READING, AND DISCUSSIONS

The book will be launched during the conference in Cooch Behar, with featured poets invited to participate in a special poetry reading session and discussions.



### PARTICIPATION DETAILS @ Cooch Behar

Please note that the poetry reading session and discussion will include participants whose work has been selected for the anthology *Prism of Consciousness*. If your poem has been selected and you wish to participate in the conference at Cooch Behar, kindly email us. We will send you the registration form.

### FOR REGISTRATION:

Same as the conference email.

### REGISTRATION FEE:

Same as the conference registration fee.

Registration will close on 22nd February 2025.

### CONTACT

Email: orbindu.ganga@gmail.com

Whatsapp: + 91 9895290371

### ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The conference is an interdisciplinary gathering of thinkers, researchers, philosophers, and artists, united in the pursuit of unraveling the mysteries of consciousness. It will feature **academic sessions, poetry readings and discussions, book launches, music workshops, an exhibition based on the theme, lecture demonstrations, and cultural events**. By linking this anthology to the conference, we aim to celebrate the poetic voice as an essential element in exploring human awareness.

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE

Indian participants : ₹ 2500

Overseas participants : \$ 31

### CONTACT

Email: conferencecaesurae2025@gmail.com

Whatsapp: + 91 8017147503

## **PUBLISH YOUR WORK IN YOUR PREFERRED LANGUAGE**

**Are you looking to expand your published work's reach beyond your language speaking audiences?**

**Our expert translation services, covering many languages, ensure cultural relevance and accuracy.**

**We are now focusing on proofreading and translation services in multiple languages, including English.**

**Contact us to discuss your publishing goals and schedule a consultation today.**

**Our publishing portfolio encompasses poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and other genres, catering to both aspiring and published authors.**

**To discuss your project you can contact at -**

**<https://wa.me/message/D6BLF6M524S2N1>**

**If you are interested for more details you can email him directly at [orbindo.ganga@gmail.com](mailto:orbindo.ganga@gmail.com)**

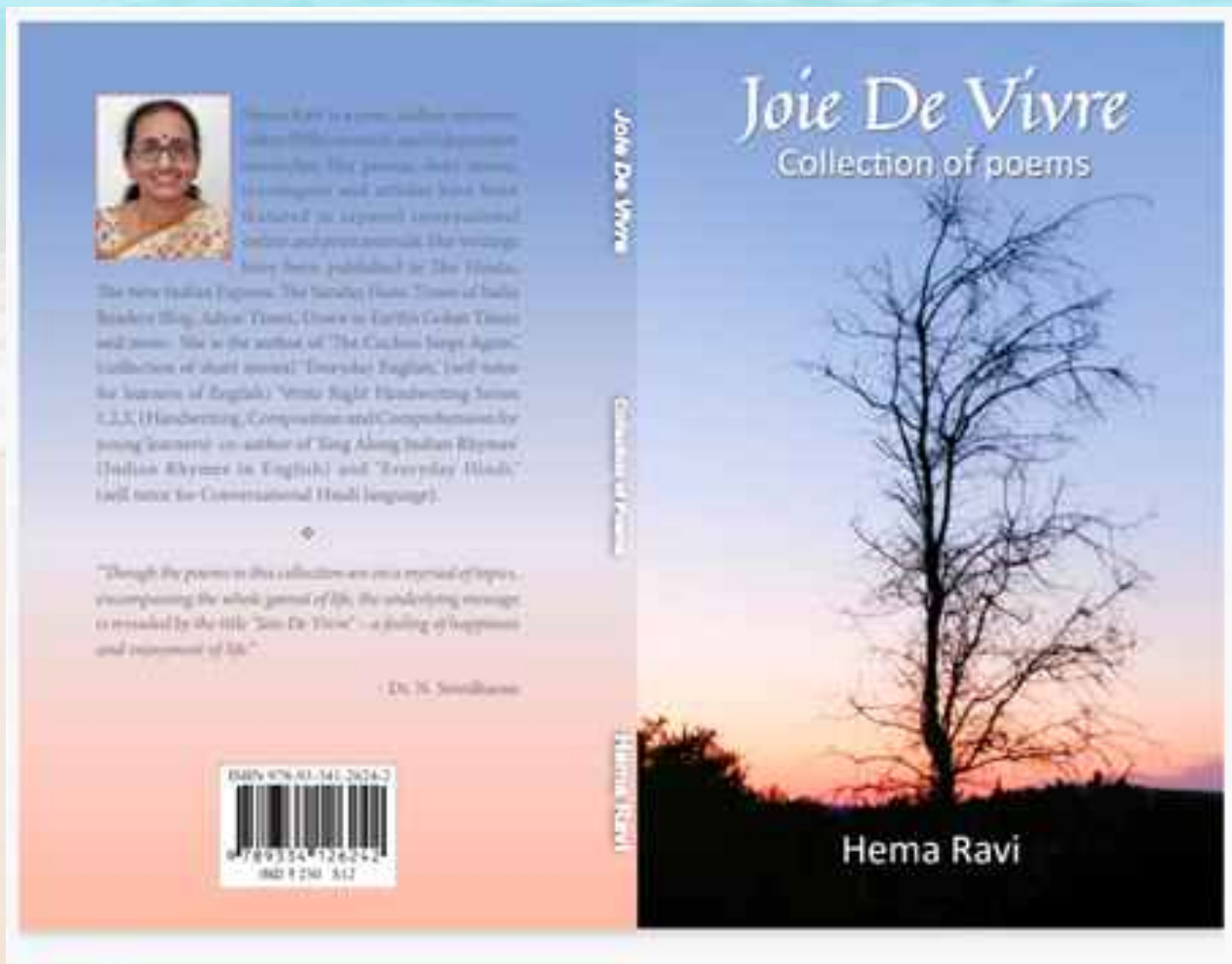


## Interesting Book releases:

**SCIENCE SHORE team congratulates our regular esteemed contributors HEMA RAVI and JAYALAKSHMI KARINDALAM for their latest poetry books!**

**Please find information below.**

### **Hema Ravi presents "Joie De Vivre"**



**If you are interested to buy a copy priced at Rs. 250  
mail her at [hemaravi24@gmail.com](mailto:hemaravi24@gmail.com)**

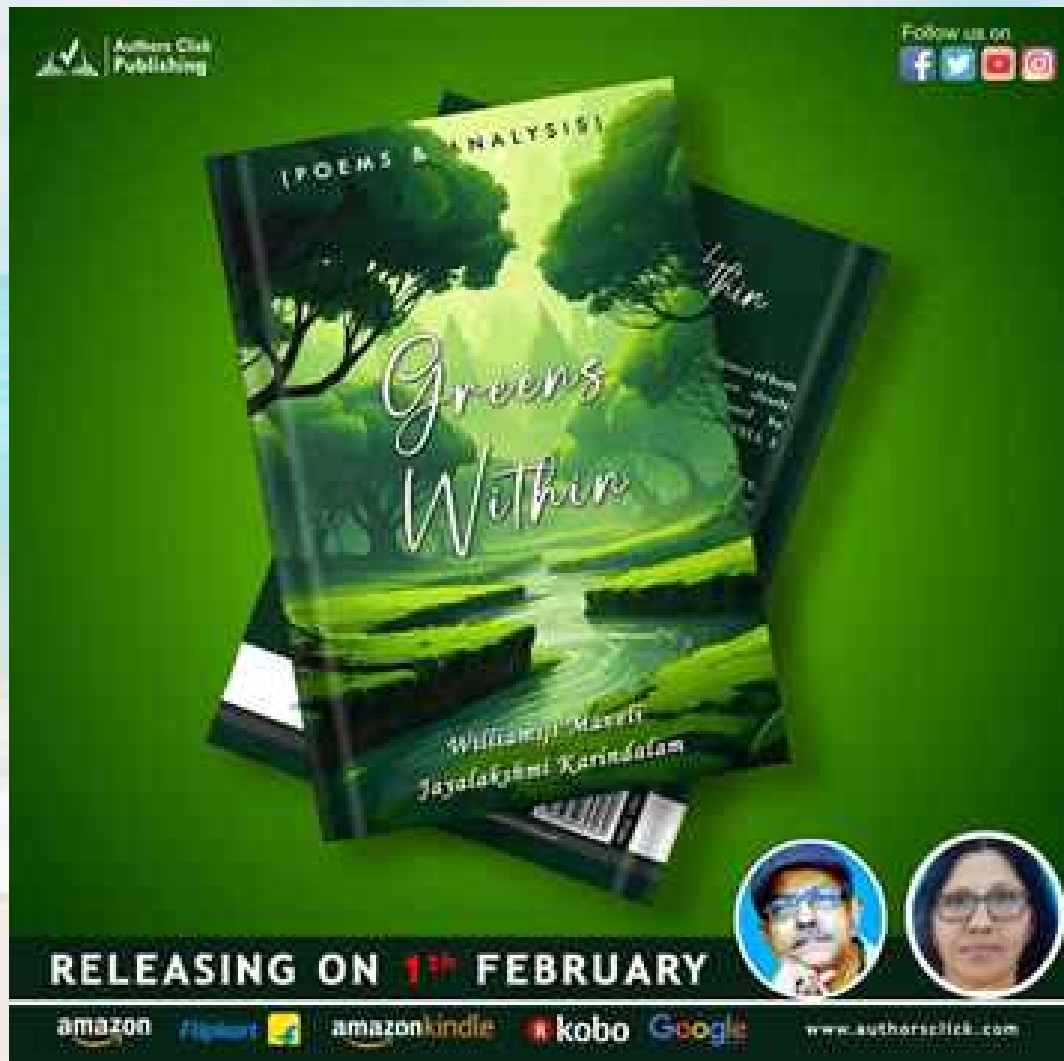


**Chennai Poets' Circle annual seminar on 19th January 2025 at Tag auditorium, Chennai**

**Chennai Poets' Circle's (CPC) Annual Seminar was conducted on Sunday, 19th January at Tag Auditorium, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Higher Secondary school, T. Nagar Chennai. The Chief guest Dr. P. Kulalmoli (Retired Principal of Government Arts College, Kulitalai released the anthology, Efflorescence 2024 (Hema Ravi, Editor) expressing appreciation for the writers and budding poets.**

**The anthology contains poems from 124 poets. CPC promotes talent and creativity.**

Jayalakshmi Karindalam presents "Greens within"



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**-Dr. PC AISHWARYA GANGA**

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*haiku - short form poetry originated in Japan*

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# **SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES**

# **BREAK THE SILENCE OF METASTASIS WITH EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE**

***You are the author of your own life,  
don't give the privilege to Cancer to edit your life***

**PC AISHWARYA GANGA**



Cancer as we all know is ubiquitous and is the second leading cause of premature death before the age of 70 years in both sexes in majority of countries. The increase in the incidence of cancer may double by the year 2050 especially in low human development index countries because of inadequate screening/diagnostic tool and less access to treatment. Lung Cancer is the most commonly diagnosed and leading cause of death world-wide that is nearly 1 in 8 cancer cases with 1.8 million deaths (1 in 5 deaths). Lung Cancer is followed by prostate, colorectal, stomach, and liver carcinoma in men whereas breast and cervical cancers in women.

Metastasis is an extraordinarily complex process, where the migratory capacity from the primary tumor site incorporates into the blood or lymphatic stream and ultimately, extravasation of tumor cells into the parenchyma of the

secondary organ. In simple terms, it means the proliferation and spread from the host cells to adjunct cells, tissues and ultimately infiltrating the organs.

Cancer can be a life altering diagnosis for some especially the beloved ones surrounding the cancer patient or survivor. The emotional turmoil accompanying the cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming leading to a culture of stigma and silence/ social withdrawal. It's time to break this silence and explore the critical role of emotional resilience in navigating the complex emotional landscape of cancer metastasis.

But how emotional resilience can help them out and what is actually Resilience?

Resilience can be defined as a process that requires self-reliance and adaptive /coping abilities when a person is subjected to a serious adverse event, such as cancer. Several Studies have demonstrated the positive effects of resilience, as well as how it is associated with better health outcomes in a holistic way, including mental and physical well-being. In holistic care, patient centered approach is met where the patient's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual aspects of life are given prime importance.

In the context of Cancer Metastasis, Emotional Resilience is crucial for managing emotional distress like fear, Anxiety, Social isolation, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder etc. maintaining relationships and for improving the mental well-being of the patient.

The emotional support enhances the self-efficacy of the Cancer Survivor and beloved ones to enhances the self-management strategies of a patient which includes assisting patients in identifying their emotional response, encouragement to express their thoughts ,helping them connect with people and communicate, problem solving skills, reducing mental burden, building confidence, helping them to adequately cope with their specific concerns like fear and anxiety about death, body image /appearance issues , fatigue and intrusive thoughts and most importantly fostering self-efficacy.

## ***Understanding the Intersection of Emotional Resilience and Mental Well-being;***

Research has shown that emotional resilience is closely linked to mental well-being in cancer survivors and caregivers. A study published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology found that:

***Emotional resilience predicts better mental health outcomes:*** Cancer survivors with higher emotional resilience reported better mental health outcomes, including reduced anxiety and depression.

***Emotional resilience enhances coping strategies:*** Caregivers with higher emotional resilience were more likely to use effective coping strategies, such as problem-focused coping and emotional expression.

***Emotional resilience fosters social support:*** Cancer survivors and caregivers with higher emotional resilience reported stronger social support networks.

***Strategies for Building Emotional Resilience:*** Breaking the silence surrounding cancer metastasis requires a proactive approach to building emotional resilience. Here are some strategies to help:

***Mindfulness and meditation:*** Regular mindfulness practice can reduce stress and anxiety.

***Emotional expression:*** Engage in creative activities, such as journaling or art therapy, to express emotions.

***Social support:*** Join support groups or online communities to connect with others who share similar experiences.

***Self-care:*** Prioritize activities that promote relaxation and stress reduction, such as yoga or deep breathing exercises.

***Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT):*** Seek professional help to develop coping strategies and reframe negative thought patterns.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

1. Ferlay J, Ervik M, Lam F, Colombet M, Mery L, Piñeros M, et al. Global Cancer Observatory: Cancer Today. Lyon: International Agency for Research on Cancer; 2020 (<https://gco.iarc.fr/today>, accessed February 2021).
2. Michael W. Parsons, Lara Traeger, Giselle Katiria Perez, April Hirschberg, and Elyse R. Park, et al. Resilience and cognitive symptoms in cancer: An exploratory study, *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (Volume 38, Number 15\_suppl) [https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.2020.38.15\\_suppl.e24079](https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.2020.38.15_suppl.e24079)

# **CURRENT NEWS - SCIENCE SERIES**

## **ARTICLE No. 17**

### **TITLE: GESTALT - THE SUM OF THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN ITS PARTS... (ALSO KNOWN AS STACKING STUFF)**

**GITA BHARATH**

The building blocks of all life are cells. By itself, of course, any single cell is composed of a nucleus (carrying genetic information), mitochondria (an energy powerhouse), and a few other organelles put together, enclosed in a membrane. Now stack some together and suddenly something catches our attention---

Let us look at an organism that has only about a thousand cells, --the peculiar TARDIGRADE ...

The toughest creature nature ever made appears to be the tardigrade...evolving half a billion years ago, surviving boiling heat and below zero temperatures. When in danger, they dehydrate, into a cocoon-like "tun" state... outlasting dinosaurs (-and wars--) and -- five mass extinction events till date!

Ejected from a rocket, this remarkable race has survived radiation and vacuum in outer space! though just the size of a dot, indistinct, they'll surely still be around when humans are extinct....

Among its thousand cells, the tardigrade has about two hundred neurons or brain cells. What happens if more cells are "stacked"? We come across another, more complex, invertebrate creature that has puzzled many --the octopus- biologists still ask," is this a true terrestrial?"

This blue-blood from under the sea  
seems like a quintessential ET!  
could it have come from really far...

hitchhiking on a comet—an interstellar visitor?

Eight limbed, each with its own brain  
a ninth to coordinate them all,  
three hearts thumping, pumping  
copper based blue blood, and yet, the creature gets  
around, not on its limbs, but on water jets!  
An octopus knows the art of camouflage, untaught,  
and is so intelligent it is rarely caught...  
it can recognise a man, deal with a puzzle,  
yet it's invertebrate, boneless, just soft muscle....

**NEXT**—what happens when we “stack” a sizeable number of cells (maybe a few trillion!)? Presto! You have a human.... So the same cells, when stacked, develop complexity, specialisation, and, ultimately, adaptability and intelligence...

Let us now look at this phenomenon of **STACKING** across non-living entities. Even amongst the forces that shape space -

The four fundamental forces we know are gravity, electromagnetism, the strong nuclear and the weak nuclear force.

## **GRAVITY**

A few centuries ago, it was widely believed that some gurus and mystics could levitate, defying gravity, after achieving certain spiritual powers. The power of levitation is called "laghutva" in Sanskrit, which means "light". "Gurutva" is another Sanskrit term for "Heaviness."

But what exactly is "Light" and "Heavy"?

Well, it all depends on the weakest of the fundamental forces we know--  
Gravity

YET...this “weak” force can raise oceans, hold cosmic bodies in their orbits, twist space time--cause the curvature of space-time, even affect light waves--the most extreme case being the black hole, with its massive gravitic forces from which nothing—not even light—can escape once past the black hole's event horizon. This is the effect of the weak, ubiquitous force of Gravity, multiplied many times. The black hole nearest to Earth is Gaia BH 1, which has a mass of 9.6 times that of our sun.

On a lighter note, will I be lighter if I stand under a full moon, when its gravity pulls me away from the earth's? No dieting, no exercise! Well, maybe only by a millionth of a gram, considering all the forces involved!

Seriously, not only does gravity give us stability, anchor everything to the earth's surface, but also has physiological effects, helping growth in plants, circulation in animals and so on.

Stacking or combining masses increases the gravitational force proportionally.

## **MAGNETISM**

Another old legend is that of a levitating Shiva Lingam that floated in mid-air in the ancient temple of Somnath. Some believe that the ancient architects used a magnetic levitation system to create this. The system may have involved a large loadstone as the ceiling magnet, a smaller iron Jyotirlinga as the lower magnet, and a layer of bismuth in between.

The Earth itself is a magnet, its own magnetic field playing a crucial role in sustaining life. This invisible magnetic shield extends from the Earth out into space, forming a protective bubble and shielding the planet from a stream of charged particles emanating from the Sun. But what if this vital field were to disappear?

We have seen that the sun itself behaves like a magnet and often reverses poles, causing solar storms. Without magnetism, the deadly solar radiation would reach Earth, increasing the mutation rate of cells and leading to cancers. Celestial bodies are massive natural magnets. And, of course, the strongest, most monstrous of these are magnetic stars...known as Magnetars.

Super-heroes of our universe  
causing star quakes, intense flares...  
with more energy than old Sol releases  
in a hundred thousand years....  
these magnetars with enormous mass  
are only as big as a city...  
if you were within 600 miles  
of a magnetar, here, your very atoms  
would warp, vapourise--  
you would be but a flash of light  
in some far-away alien skies....

Men have recently created the biggest-ever artificial magnet-- the Central Solenoid in France--

A magnet 59 feet tall and 14 feet wide, weighing 1,000 tons, that can generate a magnetic field of 13 Tesla. This is about 280,000 times stronger than the Earth's magnetic field. It is so powerful that it could lift an aircraft carrier six feet into the air. The supporting structure for the magnet can withstand forces that are twice as strong as the thrust of a space shuttle taking off!!

Will stacking magnets together make them stronger? The answer is yes! By adding one-disc magnet or block magnet on to the other, the stacked magnets will work as one bigger magnet and will exert greater magnetic performance. This does not apply to cylindrical or spherical magnets.

Moving on to another much less tangible force-- intelligence....

## **STACKING AI**

Extrapolating the concept of stacking to intelligence, specially AI, latest techniques are bringing together two previously disparate approaches to machine learning: ensemble methods and deep learning.

Just as 'many heads are better than one,' ensemble deep learning combines multiple 'computer brains' to achieve high levels of performance. Latest developments in ensemble deep learning and its application are in a range of biological and biomedical fields. They highlight achievements unattainable by traditional methods; and map out AI's potential to revolutionize molecular biological and biomedical sciences.

Here is where the non-living will possibly meet the living-- a bionic man, or an android robot, combining the strengths of both human and artificial intelligence, in the best possible way...

# UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY OF CONSCIOUSNESS: A RARE CASE STUDY OF HYDROCEPHALUS AND BRAIN ADAPTABILITY

**ORBINDU GANGA**

## **ABSTRACT**

A rare case study of a 44-year-old Frenchman with 90% of his brain structure destroyed by hydrocephalus, filled with cerebrospinal fluid, unveils the dynamic nature of consciousness, demonstrating adaptability to a changing environment despite significant structural damage. Furthermore, consciousness proves to be autodidactic, possessing the capacity to understand, learn, adapt, and reciprocate.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The human brain has been one of the most intriguing stories, revealing many facets, yet our inquisitiveness drives us to discover even more. The human brain controls many bodily functions, receiving and decoding information from the five senses—one of the most complex organs, storing and controlling your movements. As part of the central nervous system (CNS), the brain connects the spinal cord to the other organs. The cerebrum, which occupies 80% of the brain, interprets sight, sound, and touch. The cerebellum is responsible for your motor skills, balance, and coordination. The brainstem connects the rest of your brain to your spinal cord. The frontal, occipital, parietal, temporal, limbic, and insular lobes work in synergy to perform normal functions with each lobe performing a specific function. The brain's different structures and lobes have different functions and is very specific to their own function. Our understanding of each structure and lobe having a specific function to perform is true but a classic case study has challenged this notion. The specificity of a structure or lobe in performing a function is not necessarily a hard and fast rule as the possibility has expanded with this current case study.

## CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is being aware of the self within you and the world around you. Consciousness has been

observed as one's inner journey with the outside world rumination on imagination and conation. With the research finding the thought of consciousness has evolved to self-awareness wherein delving in-depth to awareness of awareness. The metacognition delves into the awareness of understanding the pattern and the journey with which it conducts itself. Francis Crick postulated in 2005 that the seat of consciousness is the claustrum, a puzzling grey matter that lies beside the insular cortex. Some neuroscientists believe that the cerebral cortex which contains the sensory and motor areas is thought to be experience consciousness. There is a supporting idea of bi-directionality in the brain network where the position of consciousness is observed in the thalamocortical loop, the interaction between the thalamus and cortical regions located in the thalamus.

The modern consciousness in the early 1990s, the researchers were inquisitive about finding the experiential correlations between the facets of consciousness and the features of brain activity. This inspired many researchers to focus on neural correlates in later years. Having opened the door for more avenues with success, with many researchers it remained fussy since the correlations remain unexplained. There were many theories propounded by many scientists but there have been four theories of consciousness that recently made an interesting observation concerning neurobiology, exemplifying the thought that a theory through experimental research can fully do justice to understanding consciousness in the brain. Higher-order theories propound that to decipher the mental state of the consciousness, the highest state in the hierarchical structure plays a significant role in unplugging the pandora's box and consuming the blueprint of the details of the consciousness. Global workspace theories postulate that the mental states of the human mind are conscious when the signals are transmitted in every part of the brain. This enables the flexible exchange of information and forms a pliable guide behaviour, accessing a wide range of cognitive processes which is beyond an unconscious state. Integrated information theory postulates that the consciousness of the human brain is

directly related to the cognition of a system to generate integrated information which primarily focuses on the phenomenological aspects of the consciousness. The position of the consciousness is proposed to be with the posterior cortical cone which is located towards the back of the brain. The back of the brain forms the parietal, temporal, and occipital lobes. The last theory known as predictive processing is the one that explains the connectivity between the facets of consciousness and their neural mechanism. When we research diverse aspects of consciousness, there will be a shift from the consciousness science theories towards the theories of consciousness itself that would blow our minds.

## **CASE STUDY**

In the rarest case of hydrocephalus in which 90% of the brain's structure is absent inside, the brain is filled with cerebrospinal fluid. This is one of the most interesting and intriguing cases ever recorded, first published in THE LANCET in 2007. According to a paper published in The Lancet, Dr Lionel Feuillet, Henry Dufour, PhD, and Jean Pelletier, PhD, observed that a 44-year-old Frenchman visited a hospital experiencing weakness in his leg. Upon reviewing his medical history, it was found that at the age of 6 months old, he had been diagnosed with postnatal hydrocephalus and he underwent a ventriculoatrial shunt. After turning 14 years old, another shunt revision was completed since he developed ataxia (inability to control the muscular movement) and paresis (weakened muscular movement, resulting in an inability of voluntary movement) of the left leg. He led a normal life with no other complexities, he was married and had two children. Upon conducting neuropsychological testing, had a slightly lower IQ than average intelligence quotient (IQ) of 75, a verbal IQ being 84, and a performance IQ of 70. When scanning was done for the brain, CT scans showed severe dilation of the lateral ventricles and MRI scans showed massive enlargement of the lateral, third, and fourth ventricles, a very thin cortical mantle and a posterior fossa cyst were observed. Suggesting a non-communicating hydrocephalus, with probable stenosis of Magendie's foramen ( abnormal narrowing of blood vessels in an opening at the caudal portion of the roof of the fourth ventricle, allowing the flow of cerebrospinal fluid ( CSF) in the brain). (1)

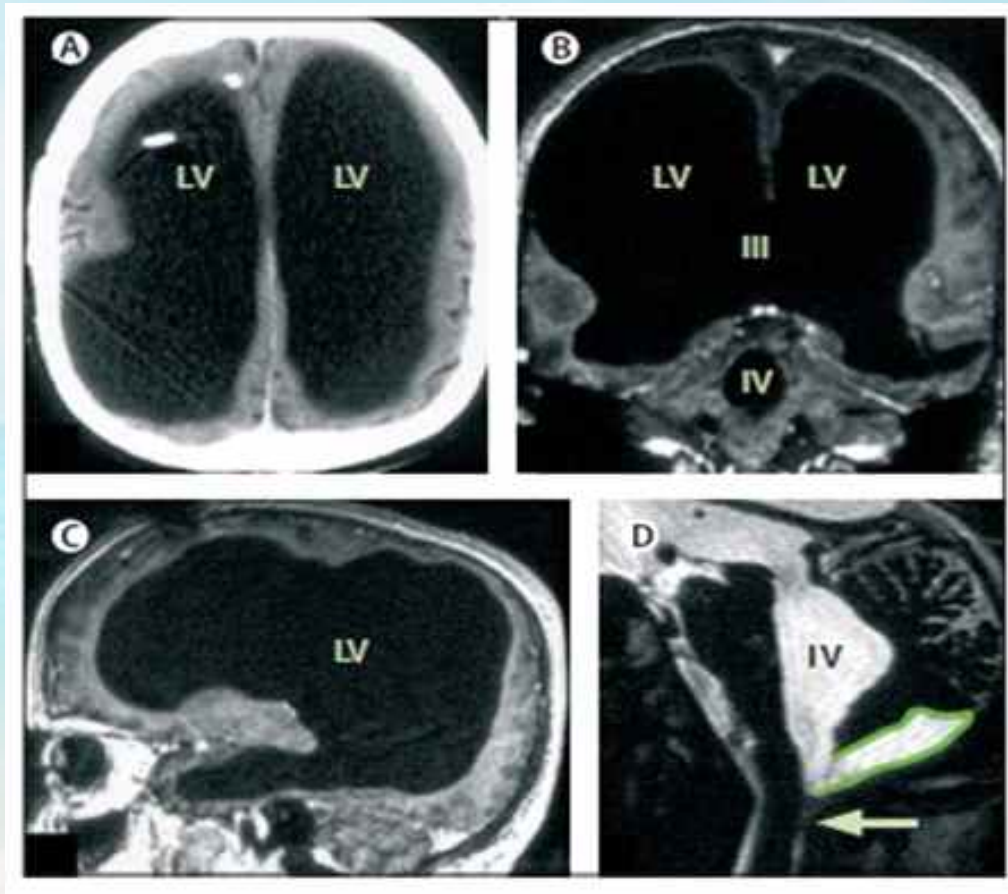


Figure: functioning Massive ventricular enlargement, in a patient with normal social (A) CT; (B, C) T1- T1-weighted MRI, with gadolinium contrast; (D) T2-weighted MRI. LV=lateral ventricle. III=third ventricle. IV=fourth ventricle. Arrow=Magendie's foramen. The posterior fossa cyst is outlined in (D).

Research suggests that consciousness is linked to specific brain regions - such as the claustrum and the visual cortex. However, in this case where 90% of the brain is only occupied with cerebrospinal fluid, consciousness is unlikely to arise since the majority of the brain is damaged. (2) According to Axel Cleeremans of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, it is hard to explain with any theory of consciousness that a person missing 90% of his neurons still exhibits normal behaviour. Such a case is a major challenge for cognitive psychologists since it may seem medically miraculous. (3) Axel Cleeremans has two observations, the first one being that plasticity is more pervasive than we thought, the brain is able to function with few neurons. And secondly, the biological activity of the brain to be aware and learn. (4) Most of the neurons that had been said to be destroyed should have compressed into fine residual particles that would have formed as layers. Those layers

wouldn't show the morphology of the brain when the scan was taken, as would be compressed against the skull. (5)

## **OBSERVATIONS AFTER THE CASE STUDY**

### **The Seat of Consciousness**

Research suggests that consciousness may be located in different brain areas. The exact location of the consciousness remains obscure as the researches have observed in areas such as the claustrum, cerebral cortex, and thalamocortical loop. Since there is still ambiguity on the location of the consciousness, it becomes even more interesting with the case study. It is considered one of the rarest cases of hydrocephalus where 90% of the structure has been compressed and filled with cerebrospinal fluid. The 44-year-old French lived a normal life without much of health issues. This is one of the most important case studies where almost all the structures are destroyed and he still leads a normal life. Here, the neurons are not completely destroyed but their existence exists on the layers of the skull with cerebrospinal fluid. Here the most important observation is that in the presence of fluid in any hydrocephalus case, the size of the ventricles increases putting pressure on the brain, resulting in the damage of the brain tissues. But in this case study, there has been no such repercussion. When you have fluid in the brain that is been almost fully occupied and the existence of structure is not existing thus ceasing the function, it is indeed the most unlikely thing to happen in a brain where the normal functions continue in spite of the absence of the structures. The existence of consciousness never arises since the damage is far more than we had ever expected but the way with which the cerebrospinal fluid has responded to have the normal function to continue in the brain thereby not affecting another region of the brain, one of the supporting idea of bi-directionality in the brain network in thalamocortical loop is never restricted to two regions alone but it could be multidirectional one. With this case study, with respect to consciousness, the location of disparity has been completely compressed since the neurons along the layers exhibit the function and the consciousness is never positioned to some of the regions that have been specified earlier by the research findings.

## Consciousness Being Autodidactic

In a normal scenario when there is an abnormality in the human brain, the brain switches on the trigger button and shows the symptoms where immediate attention is required. But in this case, almost all the structures are destroyed with the brain filled with cerebrospinal fluid, the brain will collapse with functions to be carried out. But in this case, the person lived for 44 years and still going with sound health in spite of having his brain filled with 90% of cerebrospinal fluid. Such cases are rare and with research, we can delve deeper into the functioning of the brain with respect to consciousness. In the case study, it is observed that with the change in the anatomical connections between the neurons and brain area, the neural activity changes, and accordingly the consciousness reacts. In the cases when the structure itself is destroyed with the available neuron, there is every possibility of the consciousness to react accordingly and function. This proves that consciousness is dynamic in nature and ever-receptive to changes. The adaptability to understand the status quo of the changing ambience and learning by itself to mould to the surroundings and then adapting to the changing environment makes consciousness an interesting case study by itself. They also reciprocate according to their surroundings. Having such a dynamic property by itself, consciousness to be site specific to be restricted to a given location has been completely negated but is ever-changing accordingly to understand, learn, and reciprocate to the challenges to carry out the normal function.

## CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the case study of a 44-year-old Frenchman in which 90% of the brain structure was destroyed by hydrocephalus, with the resulting space filled with cerebrospinal fluid, living for 44 years with sound health challenges our understanding of consciousness. Despite the extensive damage, he was able to lead a normal life. This case raises fundamental questions regarding the neural correlates of consciousness and brain adaptability. This exemplifies that consciousness is dynamic, not localized to specific brain regions alone,

and consciousness is autodidactic, having the capability to understand, learn, adapt, and reciprocate to changing environments despite significant structural damage. Further research should continue to explore the complex inner core of consciousness.

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## **SPOTLIGHT featuring SCIENTIST**

**SPECIAL APPEARANCE: SHRIRAM VENKATESAN, Ph. D**

**(RESEARCH SPECIALIST, POSTDOCTORAL  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, HALFMANN LAB)**



### **SHRIRAM VENKATESAN, Ph. D**

Shriram Venkatesan, Ph.D., is a staff scientist in a team, at a philanthropically-funded research organization in the US, whose goal is to understand how the cell's factory workers – proteins behave collectively in confined spaces such as within cells very differently from when they are isolated entities such as those written in traditional biochemistry textbooks. This might lead to an understanding of how physical memory might be stored and transmitted, even overriding the mandates of our genetic repository – the DNA code. Right now, his work is unraveling the fundamental causes of age-associated diseases like neurodegenerative disorders such as Huntington's disease, for which neither a timely diagnosis nor an effective cure is within reach. He started out in high school realizing that he could spend his entire life trying to answer nature's mysteries of life works at the molecular level and hopefully also help identify

fundamental understanding of complex diseases that have plagued humanity. He has been fortunate to have been able to pursue it thus far.

From applied cancer research during Ph.D., he intentionally took a deep dive into protein biophysics. He says, "we can uniquely detect and query in high throughput – the limiting event, nucleation – in the path of normal proteins to form often pathological recalcitrant aggregates. As a team, we invented a method to detect nucleation events in living cells and also devised a way to quantitatively interpret such events". Following up on that, his work has unraveled an unforeseen link between rate of translation of a protein and its tendency to nucleate to form the aggregates. He is currently working on figuring out the mechanism for this link. Things that are outstanding at the Halfmann lab, according to him are the limitless possibilities to shape the project as creatively as one can; the intellectual drive, and the uninhibited pursuit of the necessary techniques to answer the question at hand in the best way possible.

### **Interview by Dr. K. Srikala ganapathy**

#### **Can you please tell us what inspired you to Science?**

I do not have a fairy-tale story about how I wanted to be a scientist right from birth. Growing up, I was only interested in solving numerical problems and would be doing math all the time, even before other exams. Also, I was very clear about wanting to understand concepts and study rather than just memorize and score marks, no matter what was at stake. Eventually, just by following my natural interest in science, particularly realized I could spend my lifetime unpacking the secrets of life on earth. A research internship during my Bachelor studies, under the guidance of Late Prof. KM Marimuthu, an excellent mentor, affirmed my belief that research could be a career for me.

#### **Can you please share about your experiences in Research? Please add your challenging moments and proud moments.**

Being a scientist requires a certain level of humility and a seemingly opposite trait – self-belief. While culturally, my upbringing in Chennai has imparted me with

enough humility, I have struggled to maintain enough self-belief and it is a fine balance that I am still working on, as a person. In science, it is important to realize that while we are an insignificant speck in the ever-expanding universe, we can still make a meaningful impact on life around us. Proud moments in my career would include seeing my students appreciate critical thinking, and moments when data makes sense of a lot of seemingly unrelated theories, all of a sudden. One instance would be my finding how proteins inside living cells can form crystals, and what trait of theirs separates those that can transmit memory across generations of cells, from those that cannot. While implications of this discovery are apparent in neurodegenerative diseases such as dementia, a lot is still yet to be discovered on how normal life inside a cell is wired by such protein-autonomous molecular memory.

### **What would you say about critical thinking in Science?**

I think everyone can benefit from a research internship or taking science seriously in school. Critical thinking means to think of a possibility (hypothesis) for how something works, to analyze data as it is, without bias, and to be open to correcting one's beliefs informed by facts and data. We practice all these on a daily basis in scientific research. While research as a career would not appeal to everyone, even if one chooses a different career, that training in science will leave a permanent positive impact on how one sees the world around them. From knowing how to receive information and process it, to separating truth from myth, critical thinking just improves our quality of life, plain and simple.

### **Experimental work or writing and publication which one excites, appeals to you more?**

I used to enjoy doing experiments more when I was younger, but gravitate more towards thinking of problems and analyzing data, these days. However, I am conscious that discoveries are where impact is created. Brainstorming ideas is a lot of fun but it is mere storytelling if we do not follow that with actual experiments that tell us something about whether the idea was right or wrong.

## **Two persons who inspire you. Two reasons why.**

I keep thinking about the path our generation stands on – built by the ever inspiring work by various ancestors over thousands of years. I think about the dream art and architecture that exists even now in the form of temples etc. and if they could do it without much technology, why can't we do something impactful now?

Inspiration to me, is everywhere – from a bird that stitches a protective nest from all the materials it can gather, to an elderly lady who hauls a vegetable cart by herself or cooks thousands of bajjis on the street to make a living. I think humanity exhibits courage everywhere, all the time. It is for us to be open to seeing that and getting moved positively by such instances.

## **Your favorite quote.**

This changes over time, based on what I seek. Currently, it would be: “Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more and fear less.”, by Marie Curie.

## **Books that have inspired you.**

Honestly, I have never been a big reader of books, except biology textbooks or some biographies. Of the very little I have read, a biography of a pioneer woman scientist, Barbara McClintock (A Feeling for the Organism), was very impactful on me. In essence, it talks about the life story of this once-in-a-generation scientist but the underlying thread is her courage and self-belief that enabled her to do what she did, and I think all of us could use that message in our own lives. I am making an effort to read more now though.

## **Books that you are currently reading.**

Emotional Agility by Susan David

A Hero with A Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell

### **One value of Science Shore you connect with and appreciate.**

Community with a purpose. I think the story of Science Shore is wonderful – starting with the vision of one person and so many people sharing that vision over time. I only wish for more and more growth of this community over time.

### **Your message to younger generation, please.**

Believe that each of you has unique gifts within you. You just need to follow your energy and natural interest, and build a disciplined work ethic. That will convert your natural interest into something impactful surely.

Dare to be ambitious in your dream but also follow that with clear goal setting so that you identify the small steps you need to take in order to climb your dream mountain. Also, do not discount yourself just because there are big names in your field. Focus on the internal reward you get in your endeavor, not on whether you will make as big an impact as someone else.



# **ART AND HOBBY**



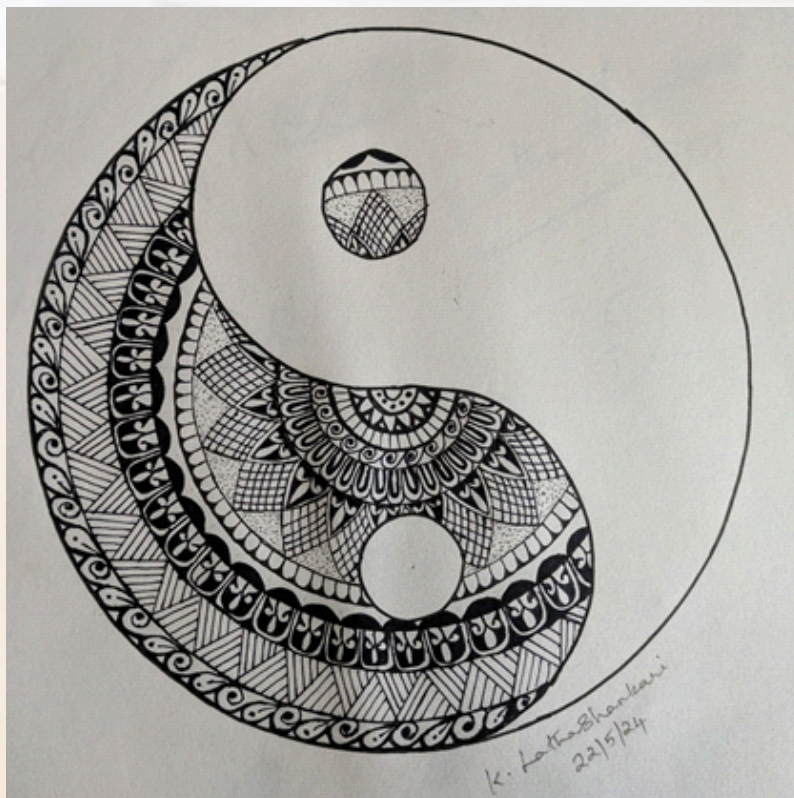
**DOODLE ART by ALEENA R. BRIGHT**  
**TITLE: THE DOODLES**



**DRAWING AND COLOURING by JUAN LENJU**  
**OIL PASTEL ON CANVAS BOARD**



**DRAWING AND PAINTING by JULIAN LENJU**  
**ACRYLIC ON CANVAS BOARD**



**ART by Mrs. LATHA SHANKARI. K**

# SPELLATHON PUZZLE

Created by

**Mrs. LATHA SHANKARI. K**

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in the puzzle. In making a word, a letter can be used as many times as it appears in the puzzle. Each word must contain the central letter. There should be atleast one eight letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper noun are not allowed.



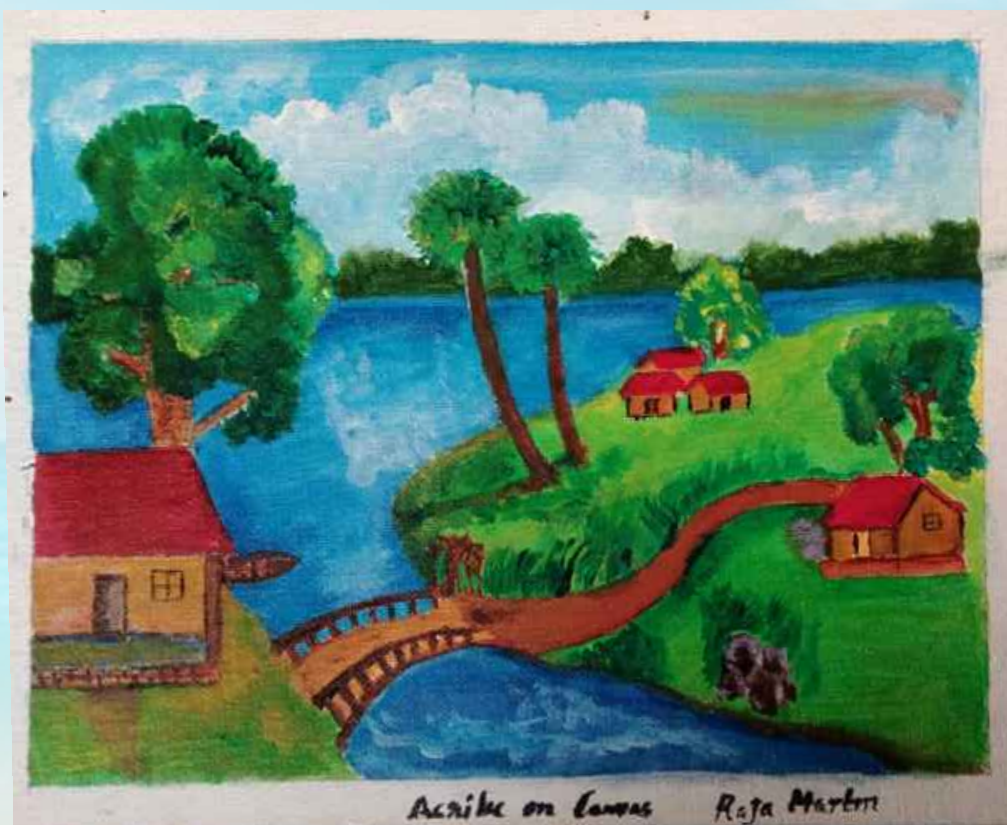
Answer in  
Page number - 40



**ART by PARVATHI DAS**



**TEXTURE PAINTING OF KRISHNA AND RADHA  
by PREETHI KANNAN**



**ACRYLIC ON CANVAS by B. RAJA MARTIN**



**ACRYLIC ON CANVAS by YOGEENDRA SAKHYA K.**



**GENERAL ARTICLES,  
RESEARCH ARTICLES  
AND SHORT STORIES**

# THE LAND OF PEACE (A SHORT STORY)

**BRINDHA VINODH**

The moon's reflection on the mirror of the lake was scintillatingly bright. Cool breeze caressed the branches of coconut trees.

The sky was purple. The melody of nightingales reverberated through my ears. Marigolds danced with yellow skirts. Serenity swathed me.

As I walked around the lake, a woman came and greeted me, "Hi, How are you?"

Her eyes were cobalt blue and I was taken aback by her height. She was about seven feet tall.

I replied, "Hi, I am fine but I am sorry, I don't recognize you."

"Oh! But I think you are from Earth. Welcome here. The land of Peace. A parallel universe. There is only one planet here and this is it.

I have heard of Earth and people there. One of my science research papers was on the study of life on earth."

"The land of Peace?" I asked her, bewildered. "Is it true that a parallel universe exists?

I am not saying peace is utopian and I experience a sense of calmness around me but I really can't believe that I am here. What happened to my family? How did I come here?

Wait, are you trying to trick me or dupe me? How do I believe you?

Why don't I see anyone else? Are you going to rob me? Are you trying to distract me?"

"Excuse me, madam. I am not trying to deceive you. I don't know how you came here.

This is a land of peace. It is completely different from earth. Here, we all mind our own work. I happened to meet you by chance and wanted to welcome you.

There are two more people from earth here. They like this land. I hope you will too."

"No, I still don't believe you."

"You see, madam, this is real. Let me introduce you to the two people who are here from earth. At least, that should make you believe that you are talking to a person, in a completely different universe. Come, let me take you to them.

It's a small land and since they are from earth, we know where they stay. It is walkable."

I followed her, still astonished and gazed around. There was no pollution and the ambience was so serene.

"Is she speaking the truth or is she trying to trap me? She hasn't harmed me so far," perplexing thoughts echoed inside my head. I followed her and when she took me to a small wooden house, I was eager to meet the other two people from earth.

BUZZZZZZZZ. I woke up, startled. It was the early morning alarm. It took me a while to realize that it was a dream. I looked around. My family, the pine tree from my window, the early morning sun, it dawned on me that I was very much on earth. I pinched myself. Yes, it was a dream and the outcome of a sci-fi movie that I had watched the previous night. I washed my face and took a hot shower. The routine began.

# MY LIFE MY RESPONSIBILITY

## GAYATHRI RAM

*My husband Ram* comes from Coonoor, a stunning town nestled in the Nilgiris Mountains. Every time I visit, I'm mesmerized by the picturesque views of rolling hills, cascading waterfalls, lush green tea gardens, and vibrant flower, fruit, and vegetable patches.

Inspired by the beauty of Coonoor, I decided to create my own little piece of paradise in our rooftop garden back in Chennai. With limited knowledge but a lot of enthusiasm, I started a small vegetable patch alongside some lovely flowering plants.

I had a special fondness for carrots and broccoli, so I eagerly planted their seeds with care, ensuring proper spacing and watering each day. But despite all my efforts, nothing seemed to happen. Days turned into weeks, yet there was no sign of growth.

It puzzled me. The soil that nourished thriving chili, eggplant, and okra plants, as well as beautiful flowers like hibiscus and jasmine, seemed perfect. I gave equal attention to all my plants, so why were the carrots and broccoli failing me?

It was disheartening to watch my dream of a flourishing vegetable patch like the ones in Coonoor wither away right before my eyes. What had I done wrong? All I wanted was to recreate the beauty of Ram's hometown in our own garden here in Chennai. *Why wasn't it happening?*

Becoming an educator wasn't my original path, but when I inherited the responsibility of running our family's school, I made a solemn vow to uphold my father's vision. He believed in providing quality education at an affordable price. Our school is located in an area once known for crime and violence, but my father's dedication slowly transformed it into an educational hub. What was once a quiet village has now become a thriving community, all thanks to the power of education provided by our school.

I had big dreams for our students and our community. Whenever I came across something that could make a real difference, I eagerly brought it to our school. From

international collaborations between schools across the globe to value-based education, skill development programs, and fostering creativity in our students, I left no stone unturned in offering the best opportunities, regardless of background.

Yet, despite all my efforts, the results I hoped for felt elusive. I poured my heart and soul into this work, and yet recognition often seemed just out of reach. Why wasn't my hard work translating into visible progress? Why couldn't everyone see the value of what we were doing? These questions weighed on my mind as I continued to strive for excellence.

*I've always been drawn to spirituality* and seeking deeper meaning in life. One such opportunity came when I decided to attend an 8-day spiritual retreat, by my teacher, Mahatria.

During the retreat, I experienced a profound sense of inner clarity. There had been lot of decluttering happening within self. My teacher's teachings resonated deeply with me.

One evening, as we sat under the stars, he spoke about the power of acceptance. He explained that our happiness depends on our ability to accept things as they are, rather than resisting them.

He illustrated and gave examples on emotional equation of one's life and concluded, my acceptance of "what is" or my non-acceptance of "what is;" IS IN MY CONTROL.

As I reflected on my journey under the stars that evening, a profound realization dawned upon me: **life isn't about recreating someone else's paradise—it's about nurturing and cherishing your own.** I had been so consumed by the idea of replicating the perfection of Coonoor's gardens or prestigious schools that I overlooked the beauty blooming right in front of me.

My rooftop garden in Chennai may never yield the same carrots and broccoli as Coonoor, but it offers the joy of fragrant jasmines, vibrant hibiscus, and a thriving chili patch—each flourishing in the soil they were meant to grow in. Similarly, my school may not mirror elite institutions in appearance or resources, but it has become a beacon of transformation and excellence in ways I had failed to fully appreciate.

Despite the odds, we achieved the International School Awards for three consecutive terms, the Alaister Burnet Award from the UK, the Gold Award from the Skills Development Curriculum in the United Kingdom, and the Green Champion Award from the Government of Tamil Nadu, among countless others. These are not mere trophies—they are testaments to what perseverance, passion, and purpose can accomplish. Yet, I had been so fixated on comparing us to others that I lost sight of the incredible impact we had already made.

In that moment, I chose to stop resisting and start accepting. Not with resignation, but with immense gratitude and hope. **My life, my choices, and my efforts are my responsibility. The soil, the seeds, the weather—they play their part, but it is my love and persistence that turn them into something meaningful.**

Acceptance is not about settling—it is about seeing the value in what we have and working passionately to make it even better.

Today, whether I tend to my garden or lead my school, I remind myself: **“Every journey is unique, and every bloom has its season. As long as I give my best, I am enough, and so is what I create.”** The accolades we’ve earned, the lives we’ve touched, and the hope we’ve sown in a community that once seemed hopeless are more than enough to inspire me to keep going. This clarity has brought me peace, purpose, and a renewed sense of joy in embracing the life I am building—one flower, one student, one moment at a time.

# MENDING HEARTS: GENTLE STROKES FOR HEALING MINDS

GLADSON MATHEW

Sarah (a pseudonym for confidentiality) sat across from me, accompanied by my co-therapist. The gentle hum in the room created a soft and comforting melody, wrapping the space in a soothing ambience of grip. The stillness between us was quiet yet tender, giving her the room to breathe, to simply be.

At only 16, Sarah carried so much heaviness—the shadows of childhood trauma, the tender aches of anxiety and depression. These burdens followed her like a heavy cloud, casting a subtle gloom over her life, influencing how she saw the world and her place in it. She often felt lost, tangled in a storm of damaging thoughts, unable to see beyond the dark. But today, something was different in the air.

**“Art speaks where words are unable to explain.”** – Unknown

With a gentle smile, I placed a crisp, white sheet of foolscap paper before her, alongside a simple pencil and a beautiful array of coloured pencils. My voice, calm and soothing, carried kindness.

“I'd like you to try something comforting and enjoyable, Sarah. Take your time, and use any colour that feels right to you. There's no right or wrong here. Just express yourself freely, in whatever way comes to you.”

I leaned back slightly, giving her space to embrace the peaceful task before her. “You can draw anything—shapes, lines, or even just a soft or hard, or both soft and hard, splash of colour. There's no need for perfection. The goal isn't to create something precise; it's to let your feelings find a place on the paper. Whether the lines are flowing freely or a little more structured, it's all okay. The most important thing is to listen to your heart, to let the emotions flow through your hand.”

With a gentle pause, I added, my voice barely above a whisper, "Think of this as a way to speak without words—a soft conversation between your inner world and the page. Take as much time as you need, and remember, this is your space, a safe space, to explore fully freely without fear."

**"The quietest moments often hold the deepest healing."** – Unknown

Sarah picked up the pencil, her fingers brushing its smooth surface, and gazed at the empty paper before her. For a moment, the silence felt vast, like the soft weight of the world pressing in, asking her to meet it. She felt the paper's quiet challenge—could she face what had long been buried? I sat with quiet patience, offering a small, reassuring nod.

She made the first mark—a single, soft line, delicate and uncertain, like the first step into new territory. It curved gently and then grew, branching into shapes, into soft circles, tender waves, spirals that seemed to speak a language she hadn't known before. Slowly, her hand moved with more confidence, like her heart was gently guiding her pencil, letting go of the need for perfection.

After a time, Sarah set the pencil aside and reached for the coloured pencils. A deep blue felt right in her hand, and she began to shade one corner of the page, each stroke bold but smooth, releasing some of the weight she'd carried for so long.

Then, without thinking, she picked up red, a bright, burning line that ran across the centre, sharp and intense, like an open wound. But then, as if to balance the tension, her hand reached for yellow—a soft, warm glow—that touched the edges of the page, like a quiet whisper of hope cutting through the darkness.

I spoke gently, my voice soothing, almost like a soft caring modulation. "Notice how the colours feel as you use them. Does the blue feel heavy,

grounding? Does the yellow bring lightness? Pay attention to how your body feels as you draw. Art has a gentle way of showing us things we may not be able to express with words.”

**“Healing begins the moment we allow ourselves to express what has long been unspoken.”** – Unknown

Sarah paused; her gaze soft on the drawing. She hadn't planned any of it, yet it seemed to tell a story—a story of her heart, of her struggles, and of the small sparks of hope she hadn't realised were still glowing inside her. The wild, chaotic lines mirrored the storm within, but the gentle yellow reminded her that light could find its way through, even in the hardest times.

As the session drew to a close, I leaned in, my tone soft, encouraging, and full of warmth. “What do you see in your drawing? What stands out to you?” Sarah's voice was soft, her eyes still on the page. “It feels... messy. Like me. But the yellow...” She paused, her voice softening further. “The yellow... it feels like there's a way through.”

I smiled kindly, my words full of gentle affirmation. “Exactly. Sometimes, what we create shows us not only where we are, but where we're going. That yellow is your light, Sarah. It's your reminder that even in the chaos, there's always room for hope. You've begun to see it, just a little bit. And that's the first step.”

Sarah left the session with her drawing cradled in her arms, the colours and feelings now captured on paper. It wasn't just a drawing; it was a glimpse of healing—a small, tender moment of reclaiming her story, one colour at a time. A soft, quiet step toward the light.

**“The wound is the place where the Light enters you.”** – Rumi

# 'PAWPAW' AKA PAPAYA

HEMA RAVI

Grandma and Riya were relaxing on the couch just after dinner.

*What story are you going to tell me today, patti?*

*A Papaya's tale...*

*Hmmm! I know that papaya is a source of antioxidants and potassium. It reduces the risk of heart disease, cancers among others... And, you certainly know that the mango is my favorite. Mangoes are richer in vitamins and minerals. Oh, I just don't like papayas!*

*Dear, you're right! Mangoes are truly delicious; however, papayas are nutritious, affordable, available almost everywhere, and above all interact with more medications than mangoes.*

*Do you recall how thatha had severe diarrhoea when he consumed a large mango at tea-time yesterday? Remember... His doctor has prescribed a bowl of papaya fruit each morning to bring down his sugar levels and also to aid the bowel movements.*

*Yes, I do!*

*See that papaya tree in full bloom over there... don't you think it's beautiful?*

*Yes, it is adorable.*

*How'd you feel if something beautiful is not appreciated, rather ignored?*

Riya yawned, wished grandma good night and retired for the day. No sooner than her head touched the pillow, she had a strange dream. She was in a land where a lone papaya tree stood amidst several leafy trees.

*What are you doing here? She asked.*

*The papaya tree replied: A parrot's droppings at this place gave birth to me.*

*My parent plant was a tall tree in a remote village at the edge of the forest where two mango trees stood. Wind and insects pollinated the various flowers and fruits appeared atop the trees. Squirrels favoured the mango fruits, so did the birds. Strangely, no bird devoured the fruits on the branch of the lone papaya tree.*

*On a Fall morning, a migratory bird saw a ripe fruit on the papaya tree and devoured it. The parrot flew into the forest to spend the night. Her droppings on the secluded forest floor had favourable conditions- and that became my birthplace.*

*The following year, again, the parrot came to the secluded spot; devoured the fruit that I had produced. Imagine my joy...*

The next morning, Riya told Grandma:

*Please keep a bowl of papaya fruit for my morning snack.*

Grandma nodded with a quizzical smile.



Papaya tree flowers @ Gandhinagar Adyar Chennai 17 11 2024 16:10 hrs.

Courtesy: N Ravi

# AGENT ORANGE AND LAMPHAT COMPANY HANDICAPPED HANDICRAFTS SINCE 1976

## LATHAPREM SAKHYA

"Agent Orange is a chemical herbicide and defoliant, one of the tactical uses of Rainbow Herbicides. It was used by the U.S. military as part of its herbicidal warfare program, Operation Ranch Hand, during the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971. The U.S. was strongly influenced by the British who used Agent Orange during the Malayan Emergency. It is a mixture of equal parts of two herbicides, 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. In addition to its damaging environmental effects, traces of dioxin (mainly TCDD, the most toxic of its type) found in the mixture have caused major health problems and deformities for many individuals who were exposed and for their children." (Courtesy: Wikipedia)

To rehabilitate these people in Vietnam, they started these handicraft institutions.

One such institution is "The Lamphat Company Handicapped Handicrafts since 1976" situated in Ho Chi Minh City in South Vietnam. Here, they create lacquered wares, pictures, wooden objects, furniture, etc., and sell them. Sixty per cent of the proceeds go to the artisans.

In our visit to Ho Chi Minh City, conducted by the Greenwich Travel Group, we visited this institution, too. It was a sad occasion for me to see them and listen to their painful life, which they transformed into awesome art objects. We, the members of the group, heartily purchased, as part of the money went to support the artisans and their families.

I am posting here a few pictures we took when we were there. We were not allowed to photograph the exquisite art objects that were put on sale. From them, we learned that the objects and paintings were made of raw materials they sourced around them, like duck egg shells, sea shells and lacquer. The finished paintings they created and the numberless objects ranging from big flower vases to tiny ones and many objects like candle holders, boxes and containers of various shapes and paintings left us speechless.

Lacquer painting is an ancient art, as old as 8000, practised in China and Persia. It was introduced in Vietnam by French artists in the 1930s and was comparatively a young art. It is called "sơn mài" in Vietnamese.

Making a lacquer painting is not easy. It may take several months depending on the technique used and the number of layers of lacquer used for the painting, the size of the painting or the object on which it is painted. It is a subtracted method of painting which is arduous and takes a minimum of 75 to 115 days to finish a piece of work. I was deeply impressed by the artist's patience and the final results. We were not allowed to take any pictures of the amazing array of scintillating artwork exhibited there for sale. As we could express our happiness and empathy only through purchase, all of us bought various items from the sales emporium, bringing smiles to their faces.



# PINCH ME

## LEENA THAMPI

As I stepped outside, the gentle drizzle caressed my skin, yet the sky remained clear. The sun shone brightly, its warm rays dancing in the cool breeze. I sensed a rainstorm brewing miles away, carrying airborne raindrops to this unlikely spot. The atmosphere was alive with the essence of a sun shower.

In that moment, a divine call from the universe stirred within me. I knew I had to leave for Tirupati immediately. This wouldn't be my first visit – my husband and I had travelled there twice before. Each time, the experience was unique, leaving an indelible mark on my soul.

This trip, too, was unplanned. We secured special entry tickets on the spot and navigated through the throngs of devotees. Finally, as I approached the sanctum sanctorum, the crowd's momentum propelled me forward. Before I knew it, I was swept past the shrine without even a glimpse of the idol. Alas! Six hours of waiting in the queue had been in vain.

With a heavy heart, I collected the prasadam, the sacred offering. Yet, something unexpected happened next...

Overwhelmed with anguish, I collected the prasadam and retreated to a corner, tears streaming down my face. An elderly man beside me lamented about his inability to receive the blessed food despite enduring the endless queue with a fractured leg. Moved by his plight, I offered him my prasadam, bringing solace to his weary eyes.

But my heart remained heavy, grappling with the thought of being denied a glimpse of the idol. "Why did I travel 200 kilometres overnight, only to be turned away?" I wondered. "Has God forsaken me? Have I committed a sin?" The questions swirled, fueling my despair.

As I turned to leave with a heavy heart, a gentle touch on my shoulder halted me. A banana leaf filled with sacred offerings materialized before me, presented by a mysterious figure shrouded in divine energy. His face remained obscured, but an aura of charisma and compassion enveloped me. The only sound was the soothing resonance of a conch, as I watched him heading towards the sanctum.

The whole thing left me with goosebumps.

That transcendent encounter remains etched in my memory, defying explanation. My husband was stunned to find the sacred offerings, once placed at the Lord's feet, now resting in my hands.

Who's that?

I never try to narrate the story to anyone because divine experiences are rare and personal, not everyone get convinced...and do I really need validation?

As the wise saying goes: "For those with faith, no explanation is necessary; for those without, none will suffice."

In that moment, I realized that God resides in every pure heart, awaiting discovery. Our Karmas make our lives.

**Answer for the  
Spellathon puzzle:**

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. Relation | 7. Real  |
| 2. Linear   | 8. Rate  |
| 3. Learn    | 9. Earn  |
| 4. Learn    | 10. Tear |
| 5. Later    | 11. Tire |
| 6. Near     | 12. Tare |

# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER VS IGNORANCE IS BLISS

**T S MANOHAR**

"Knowledge is power", thundered the professor banging his fist on the table.

But for knowledge, we will not be enjoying power, position and prominence in this ever evolving society. If the industrial revolution was a great disruptive movement, heralding new processes and automation in the 18th century, the developments thereafter have only grown manifold. Man has already set foot on the moon and space exploration is ever increasing. Medical science is inventing new medicines to enhance the longevity of life to prevent and treat diseases. Information technology has enabled connectivity, knowledge transfer and communication, very simple.

The Wright Brothers with their knowledge applied themselves to first invent a prototype aeroplane or just a rudimentary flying machine. For an aircraft to fly they determined that lift and thrust have to overcome weight and drag and continue to fly. Thus was born the theory of flight or the theory of aerodynamics.

In present day sports, teams employ video analyst to systematically examine video footage to evaluate the players' performance, team dynamics, and apply strategy to outwit the opponent in very game. In short, they do a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) analysis to win a match.

Again, "Knowledge is power my dear friends. Anybody contesting?", he queried.

I raised my hand meekly. "Professor, I agree knowledge is power, but I feel ignorance is bliss, too!"

"That's interesting young man, can you substantiate", he said slightly amused.

"Taking your example of the theory of flight sir, the Bumble bee with its huge body and tiny wings cannot fly as per aerodynamics theory. But unfortunately the humble Bumble bee is ignorant of it and hence it flies".

There was a rustle and applause in the room.

Continuing I said, "Coming to sports, my team was pitted against a champion side in a limited over cricket match, recently Sir.

SWOT analysis indicated we would be thrashed swift and sound. The opponents were an organized team with established players in their side. To begin with they put up a huge score. As clouds formed, we prayed for rain, as we could split the points. A huge wind blew away the clouds and loss of early wickets was beginning to blow away our chances too. Two uncapped players who were roped in to form an eleven, were sent in to bat. They had played gully cricket and not had any serious coaching of the game. They were totally ignorant of the reputation of the bowlers. From the first ball they flayed the bowling with their unorthodox batting style and strokes. So much so, we were at the threshold of victory, when clouds formed again. This time around, the opponents were praying for rain, lest they be embarrassed. The rain God paused and came pouring only after we scored the winning runs. So much for ignorance, Sir", I concluded.

The deafening silence was followed by thunderous applause. The professor joined the same, sportingly and said, "I concede my dear friend".

# DARLING DAUGHTER

**NALINI JANARDHANAN**

My dear Swarna,

I know that you have many problems at your workplace. I could also feel that you are disappointed and sad. Just don't worry about others. People are always there to criticize and discourage you. Remember that very few are your well-wishers and good at heart. But as far as God's blessings are with you, you need not be disappointed about your future. God is not punishing you. He has better plans. He is preparing you to be one in a million. Don't get tired or frustrated by waiting. Trust in God and proceed on your journey of life with courage. Whenever you feel like quitting, think about why you started. Nothing is impossible if you have God's grace. When God is your friend, you are never alone. Try to be like a flower which blooms where it is planted. As the saying goes 'Nobody taught the river about the way to ocean. Those who are passionate about their destination, do not take opinions from others'. So, straighten your crown and walk along the red carpet to receive your awards of achievements. I still remember the fashion show in UKG in which you participated and won the prize. You are always a winner. You are braver than you think and stronger than you know. My blessings and best wishes are always with you.

Darling, you are my princess, my precious diamond. You are my Cutie pie! You mean the world to me. I will be there for you sharing your moments of happiness and sorrows. Believe me...It's a Pinky promise! Never forget that you are my Best Friend Forever!

Moreover, people do say that you are exactly like me, isn't it? I am proud to tell you that you are my mirror image! Never stop dreaming. May all your dreams come true!

God bless you, dear!

Wishing You an Awesome New Year!

Love forever and always from Mom,

- Dr Major Nalini Janardhanan

# PARALLEL UNIVERSES: DÉJÀ VU - A SIGN OF EXISTENCE (PART 9)

## ORBINDU GANGA

The familiarity and unfamiliarity that cross our minds so often become hackneyed as part of the ongoing process, and we tend to overlook many such thoughts. Everything happens so apace that we are usually more unaware than we are aware, failing to explore. The ever-flowing stream of experiences makes you flow with the processes; you see such feelings, which become fleeting experiences. We tend to open our eyes wide when we occasionally realise something quite weird. Then we start exploring; the feeling becomes an experience that we try to comprehend, which becomes eerie. The status quo of something happening becomes either familiar or unfamiliar; then, we start thinking whether it was a dream whether something has happened before or whether it is a sign of things to come in the future. You doubt yourself and your brain whether you have been tricked into seeing such things. Playing tricks is how one reads the mind. It is never that the brain is playing a trick, but you are unable to comprehend and understand the situation; we cannot elevate our thought process to think and analyse why such things keep repeating. Many such feelings are left unattended; only when you notice and see the series of feelings unfolding meticulously can you get the real picture. It becomes clear as we delve into the series of feelings that lead to experiences.

Déjà vu is the state of feeling that one has experienced something that has happened before, even though you haven't experienced it happening. The etymology of déjà vu is derived from the French word, meaning already seen. Such a weird experience makes you feel like you're reliving the moment, making you wonder if your mind is playing tricks. Many such experiences truncated from déjà vu have led many to wonder about the existence of these experiences, leading to further exploration of the human mind with the form and formless entity of the being. Jamais vu is one such experience that has later been observed that combines unfamiliarity and familiarity in a fascinating way. Jamais vu is the state of feeling unfamiliar with something that is very much familiar to you. Jamais vu is derived from the French word that means never seen. Jamais vu often occurs in daily life, but you rarely realise it, such as asking someone to spell a word you've been using for years; and suddenly, the familiar word seems unfamiliar when spelling it. There are many examples, but the thoughts hush every day; you may

need to look at such things seriously. Such temporary feelings of being unfamiliar with familiar words, phrases, places, persons, or situations are often overlooked. We tend to see our thoughts, feelings, and experiences as part of the process.

Popularly called the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon, *presque vu* exists whenever we lose track of something close to being spelt out. *Presque vu* is the state of feeling occurring when we are on the verge of recalling a word, phrase, name, place, or idea but unable to retrieve the information. Such feelings of being unable to recognise or identify specific things are frustrating, being on the brink of trying to figure it out and failing. *Presque vu* is derived from the French word, literally meaning almost seen. Many describe the feeling as being on the brink of an epiphany; it disappoints when such feelings often repeat. *Déjà rêvé* is an experience of walking through something you have already dreamed of. The phenomenon of experiencing the current situation as a dream that happened before, exactly like the same, dreams becoming reality, *déjà rêvé* is a French term meaning already dreamed. The feeling of meeting someone, but thinking you've already met that person in the same place, is perplexing; this phenomenon is exemplified by dreams of something seen happening before us in reality. *Déjà vécu* is an intense experience that feels similar, but untrue to have already experienced the present situation. Derived from the French term, meaning already lived, *déjà vécu* refers to recollective confabulation. At times, the experience becomes intense, and the behaviour pattern of the person changes, and the person adopts the false one—the one that felt to have already occurred but in reality never to have occurred.

The most defining moment is realizing that such experiences occur in our daily lives, making us wonder to ponder the creation and the phenomenon. However, when we analyse, we notice a series of thoughts hovering to experiences like *déjà vu*, *jamais vu*, *presque vu*, *déjà Rêvé*, or *déjà vécu*. The sign of the existence of another universe is subconsciously felt by the form and formless, travelling and experiencing; it is felt in the conscious mind, but being in the flow, none are seriously interested in looking. When we closely look at *déjà vu*, the experience of being in another universe has already happened; the thought of such experience is felt by the conscious mind once formless passes the message from formless to form. The experience of *Jamais vu*, being unaware of things you already know, is being in another universe before and losing the touch of self in the present universe. The journey of being in multiple universes shall make you adapt to each universe differently; at the same time, you feel lost regarding many familiar things in one universe, which are slightly different in another universe, making it difficult to recollect things that are familiar to you, giving rise to feelings associated with

presque vu. Dreams becoming reality, with the sketches seen in the dreams reciprocating in real life, is a wonderful feeling; déjà rêvé is one such state where an experience that occurred in another universe is seen and visualised as happening again in the present universe. An experience that wouldn't have occurred in the present universe becomes more intense. However, in the present universe, the experience is given a false identity, which is a phenomenon called déjà vécu. Having many such experiences in the current world has links to another dimension.

The existence of another dimension is just a touch away from the current reality, the universe we inhabit, having a form that has many more versions of it. The sign of such existence is visible in the form of various experiences, which we do not need much until we try to decipher the code when a series of feelings becomes an experience. As the thought flows, many thoughts go unnoticed, which are signs of another dimension we live in. The experiences that occur in another dimension or are to occur in the future are felt via the subconscious, and when carefully analysed, the conscious mind leaves the tides to flow; you, being thoughtful enough, shall be able to read the sketches. Some of the phenomena associated with having the signs of another dimension inhabitant have been cited, adding more layers of understanding. With an artificial wormhole being created, the possibility of nearing another dimension is opening the sluice gate, but we need to wait for the final findings of the research. The future looks bright for experiencing multi-dimensional layers of the universe; we hope to feel the experience of the self in different dimensions.

# **BHADRA'S BREATHTAKING BEAUTY**

## **(PART - 1)**

**SARANYA FRANCIS**

It isn't often that one gets to witness an unspoilt, underexplored sanctuary that both rests and heals one's senses. Karnataka is a haven to many such treasures. Among these verdant treasures, as if jewels to a priced crown, are the tiger reserves of Karnataka. I've had the opportunity to visit most of them over my travels and have always been met with an unmistakable sense of awe about how every forest is different, even ones situated barely a few kilometres away from each other. I thought why not share the joy of having visited these places with you readers as a series and Science Shore was my first choice to initiate the same.

We begin this series with Bhadra Tiger Reserve within the Chikkamagalur district of Karnataka. The Bhadra Forest Reserve is the 25th Tiger Reserve of India. This locality is a part of the Malenadu. It was first designated as 'Jagara Valley Wildlife Sanctuary' in 1951 by the local administration of the time. In 1974, it was expanded to its current size and renamed Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary.

As a Project Tiger Reserve, the Wildlife Sanctuary was designated in 1998. Bhadra is the nation's first tiger reserve to successfully finish a village relocation program. In 1974, the first relocation plan was presented, and by 2002, all 26 settlements inside the sanctuary had been successfully moved to M C Halli, which is around 50 km away. The sanctuary is flanked by the Lakkavalli lake and the Bhadra dam which makes for a beautiful boat safari. Whenever visiting a tiger reserve in Karnataka, I'd highly recommend one stays with the Jungle Lodges and Resorts properties which are run and maintained by Forest Department of The Government of Karnataka, JLR operates excellent safaris and has knowledgeable naturalists and wildlife experts who are invaluable to the safaris one chooses to go on.

The Bhadra Reserve offers both boat and jeep safaris to its guests and also has options for some water sports. Visiting the Bhadra Tiger Reserve is a thrilling experience, offering a chance to immerse oneself in the untamed beauty of nature. The safari presents an incredible opportunity to spot majestic creatures like tigers, leopards, elephants, and gaurs, alongside crocodiles, deer, wild boars, and even monitor lizards. For bird enthusiasts, the reserve is a haven, home to over 200 bird species, including the Grey Junglefowl, White-rumped Shama, Racket-tailed

Drongo, Malabar Pied Hornbill, and Brown Fish Owl. Raptors like the Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Osprey, and Crested Hawk Eagle soar overhead, while River Terns, seen mainly from January to June, grace the waters. The lush landscapes and diverse wildlife make the safari an unforgettable adventure.

I visited it during the off-season of November-December but managed to still catch most majestic animals except of course the tiger, several birds, the monitor lizard, the Malabar squirrel and in a surprise spotting some beautiful hornbills as well. The dam overlooking the bridge, the temple attached to the dam project, the sprawling fields of arecanut and coconuts all make for an unforgettable setting for a relaxed getaway from the stress and strain of the city. Be prepared to walk and climb quite a bit as the region itself lends to such a scene, however the locals are extremely helpful in taking people around and it should not be much of a challenge. Summers get a little warm and humid but the sightings are at their peak, one can see the submerged islands of the backwaters emerge and speak of days of yore through their roots. One can take a short drive to Tyvarekere Lion and Tiger safari as well as Sakkarebyluru Elephant camp from here within an hour or so.

The Bhadra Forest Reserve is easily accessible from major cities like Bengaluru, Mysuru, Belagavi and Shivamogga. The nearest airport being Mangaluru, railway stations being Tarikere, Birur and Ajampura this is worth a visit to those who are prepared to enjoy the majesty of the forest without focusing on wildlife sightings as their main objective. The tiger remained elusive to me and I am hoping that will change soon.





# REKHA AND HER FRIENDS

## SETALURI PADMAVATHI

A few years ago, I was teaching in an international school, which is still known as a prestigious one. The students were very happy with the comforts, activities, teaching techniques and especially all the festive occasions that made them understand Indians' culture, customs, and traditions.

Rekha, an 11-year-old girl who was born with a silver spoon in her mouth, and who spent a few years in the USA, had become popular in the whole school. She became the apple of her teacher's eye in every art, sport, music, and stage performance. Besides, she was an attractive and enthusiastic child. I strongly felt that her boldness and self-confidence were her strengths which made her a child prodigy.

She was as brave as a lion.

I asked her, "Could you anchor the independence day programme tomorrow?"

She smiled and said, "Yes teacher, I would love to."

I said, "Many audiences will arrive, and various cultural programmes will take place in our spacious ground."

Rekha assured me, "I can do my job successfully, teacher." She was as cool as a cucumber.

I was confident that she would do it very well, as her voice was so sweet, and she had a good command of the English language. She held the mike boldly and anchored the programme systematically. Her jokes, quotations, and comments after every programme were extraordinary.

Rekha used to move with two of her classmates who were talented and very close to her – Reshma and Swati.

Swati was a graceful dancer and attained appreciation from people around her.

Reshma was a good poet and painter who used to exhibit her work on the notice board. Her friends and teachers praised her for her best paintings.

One day, she wrote a nice poem on her mother, describing her beauty, qualities, behaviour and talents. It was selected for the first prize.

Swati was as proud as a peacock since she was a well-known dancer in her class and very good at studies too.

In a nutshell, Rekha was an intelligent girl, grasped things easily and practised her subjects well to get a very good percentage in her examinations. Once, she scored the highest mark in all subjects.

Swati and Reshma also scored very good marks but a bit jealous of their best friend, Rekha. They couldn't guess the reason why she was recognized and attracted by everyone.

They used to feel that Rekha was given much importance and many chances to anchor in almost all the programmes.

Reshma's parent, Meera, who's a teacher in the same school, used to observe their performance and suggest her child to do better in further studies. She was green with envy over Rekha's continuous achievements but used to hide her nature often.

Meera said to her daughter, "Your best friend always achieves success and is well known as an intelligent child with numerous capabilities. If you try hard, you will win in all the competitions."

Though she advised her daughter in a positive manner, she expressed her feelings about Rekha and jealousy indirectly.

On 5 September, Teachers' day was celebrated grandly by all the students in the school, and Reshma was given the green light to start the programme with her lovely poem, in which she expressed her respect and gratitude to all the teachers for their dedication.

Swati performed a solo programme – Kuchipudi dance which was her favourite dance form. The audience applauded and she was appreciated by all.

Out of the blue, Rekha associated with Reshma in anchoring the programme which continued for two hours. She was a great support to her throughout the celebration.

Reshma and Swati felt so happy and thanked Rekha for her continuous help without any selfish nature.

Reshma said, "We get an opportunity once in a blue moon and must make use of it very well."

Swati said, "Yes, We should."

Swati and Reshma realized that Rekha was not a selfish student. Furthermore, she was very kind, simple, cooperative and friendly.

Reshma's mother was tickled pink when she brought beautiful gifts home. Meera was as happy as a lark to see them.

Reshma didn't understand her mother's behaviour properly.

In the terminal exams, Rekha, Reshma and Swati worked very hard and passed their tests with flying colours.

I thought that parents do feel jealous of some students and may compel their children to study and succeed in every activity. Some of them felt that if their children did not do well in their exams, they would get a bad name in society. On the other hand, they would make them realise their competitiveness at an early age, which was highly impossible for the child to understand.

I quoted, "Every child is intelligent and capable of doing things well in a classroom along with others. They should be shown a way to come up or bring out their hidden talents."

I said to Reshma and Swati, "Ups and downs are common for everyone. Competitiveness grows gradually. The healthiest competition occurs when average people win by putting in above-average effort. Jealousy is, I think, the worst of all faults because it makes a victim of both the parties."

Reshma and Swati smiled at me and shook their hands with Rekha.

# SCRIBBLES FROM MY HEART (THREADS OF LIFE EXPERIENCE)

SHINY VIKAS

∞There is this feeling that keeps me tied up or keeps flowing far and wide.... those unknown moments ...I could never define. The heart sees the truth and the universe make the moment still and resilient. ∞

∞Catching up...youth, middle age all I feel is a 5-year-old to a new school. Holding my pen, new smell of books, new pupil, teachers, Can I start a new chapter now on. ∞

∞The music ...I listen to its slow rhythm...playing unconcerned or holding deepest love for the listeners ...who knows the music not just plays around...it feels, sees and captures the listeners' mind. Keep the beautiful music in your heart and mind. ∞

∞Missing moments...the sunrise, the rays that fills my heart, the fragrance of flowers from my garden, the cool friends, people who never learned hard, to smile. The breeze, the deep blue sea and the dusk waiting the golden sunset.... the walks, the poems, my favourite books, the songs in the radio, the hot coffee, my hope to live better each day. I hold every breadth and love of my loved ones...the sun can never fail us so does the moon...light absorbs light ...I hold on to the light .... healing and holding my special moments. ∞

∞To learn new things seems very tough...not that I am a poor learner.... because my basket is full...as it keeps filling...I empty my mind...slowly...lovingly...I wrap my dreams and move on to my beautiful journey ...I embrace life to its fullest. ∞



# POETRY

# SOMNATH

## GITA BHARATH

It streaked through the sky one summer night,  
and fell to earth with a thunderous sound.  
It dug a shallow hole in the ground  
and there it stood proudly upright,  
an iron-and-nickel meteorite.

The farmers who found it took it to town  
giving it to a chemist of great renown.  
He recognised its magnetic properties at once  
and conceived an idea of great brilliance.

The king was constructing a great temple,  
his coffers overflowing with the ample  
revenue from the metal industry.  
The unnamed scientist decided that he  
would make a levitating lingam, seemingly divine  
with diamagnetic bismuth from a nearby lead mine.

With bismuth embedded in the ceiling and floor  
and bar magnets from the king's own store,  
the meteorite-lingam was suspended in air  
to the amazement of men everywhere.

The invader Ghazni was filled with wonder  
his men passed swords over and under  
the lingam to search for hidden chains...  
they finally broke what they couldn't understand  
and only the remains  
of their plunder and loot were left behind...

The name of the king and chemist  
have long been lost in history  
But the floating lingam, it's mystery,  
was so striking, it still persists...  
in our collective consciousness.

# WOMAN, NOT SIMPLY WOMAN

**HIMANSHU BHUSHAN JENA**

Woman is not simply woman;  
She is mother, sister, daughter, better half, friend...  
In every form she is ever graceful and adorable to the core

She is the incarnation of service and sacrifice  
She is the fountain of fragrance in work and worship

As a mother she nurtures and nourishes her children with her magical love and care  
As a sister she prays all day and night for her brother's wellbeing and happiness  
As a daughter she plucks flowers of infinite joy for her parents  
As a better half she stands by like the Great Himalayas in both summer and spring  
As a beloved she fills every moment in aroma of romance and thrill  
As a friend she shares her feelings, emotions and reactions in a natural way with  
cascades of fun and laughter

Woman is not simply woman; She is divine to the fullest!

# **PENNED PLEASURE**

## **JAYALAKSHMI KARINDALAM**

Penned emotions my soul satisfaction  
Humble way to exhibit my gratification.  
At your feet I bestow this bouquet of epics.  
All the pain and pleasure I underwent.

Dawn till night I search for thy mesmeric smile  
Hidden thrills in stones till stars.  
For I am a destined roaming rhymers.  
Depict and release prayers for your infinite pleasure.

Peace is the propitious terrain for my dreams to flourish  
Love, the elixir filled in thickets for me to trust.  
Beauty, a mystery bewilder me on sky and earth.  
Truth is final, I sacrifice myself for your sustainability.

# THE CEMETERY

## JELLIE N. WYCKELSMA

The gravediggers did their job  
The hearse quickly departed  
The grieving period started  
The wailing came from everyone in town  
While on the coffin flowers,  
Tears and clods of dirt rained down

Two centuries have passed, yet alas  
The burial plot is now covered with weeds and grass

One sunny day in May a young man enters the cemetery  
The township's history he is researching  
He discovers the upright, weathered tomb  
The missing link in the local history  
In his excitement he shouts "Hurrah"  
Its sound bounces all around this sleepy burial ground  
Then without any further delay  
His mobile phone records the picture of the day!

# **TWILIGHT**

## **JELLIE N. WYCKELSMA**

Harsh sunlight soon will be replaced by softer rays of the moon  
Now life can slow down to a comfortable pace  
Gone is the participation in the daily rat race  
Through city traffic every early morn  
Time to enjoy the twilight zone from dusk till dawn

Pushing worries aside, relaxing with friends  
Enjoying dinner together with a glass of wine or two  
Toasting to good health and prosperity  
Talking and lots of laughing too  
Trusting true friendship's continuity

Twilight nears its ending  
Saying goodnight to our friends  
Late in the evening the bed beckons  
Time to slide in between the covers till dawn  
Resting, yet energising the body  
Ready to face the inescapable rat race of the next morn ...

# WINTER AUBADE

**JULIE MILES**

I toss and turn the cheeks and skin from the "I love you" seasons.  
They churn like a butter wheel craving a sugared freshness  
that made breathing like an obstacle full of groans and I am sorry(s).  
They seek forgiveness and a place in your notebook.  
Hopeful thoughts and ideas warmed by the grace in yesterday's snow globes.  
We apologized for misunderstandings that held down softest wings  
designed to fly.  
Flying with a charming eloquence which attached to the childish  
girl I became in your presence.  
Where are your arms and shoulders this chilly evening in Virginia? Have I asked  
too much of the academic icon who sits atop a throne in Patna?  
The air is getting colder and your eyes look tired and lonely.  
Remembering the moon and every dimple that shadowed the heart you watered  
with sweet talk.  
Frozen sugar that glued my young eyes shut.  
Can anyone translate the language of pure love which has become foreign?  
Daybreak fastens all the memories held captive in a winter capsule that is easier  
swallowed with sweet tea and honey.  
You are ink and milk which fortifies and frees a yearning for warmth and safety.  
When morning comes, my wings will fly to you in the brightest sunlight  
imaginable.  
With flowers attached to an aging smile and growing heart, we have expanded  
ourselves and identities to reach something that is not visible to the rest of the  
world, or the season.  
Nothing has ever lifted me higher than you.  
Winter becomes us.

# CITY OF GLASS

## KAMAR SULTANA SHEIK

Venice, of the waterways,  
A fairyland that has stood the test of time...  
Stuff of folklore and romantic tales,  
Blue-green glassy waters, cerulean skies,  
Byzantine heritage of art and craft,  
Towering Castles, reminding one  
Of the Lady of Shallot,  
I see Shakespeare's dreamy-eyed Bassanio,  
Love in full blossom in his proud bosom ...  
Land of fashion, film and festivals,  
A colorful landscape overall,  
So beautifully reflected in the waters that surround it...  
Doubling the beauty and the gaiety  
As the gondola of my mind  
Winds it's way through the panorama called Venice,  
Somewhere the lines from the Great Gambler\* play in my inner ear...  
"Is zindagi ke din kitne kam hai  
Kitni hai khushiyan aur kitne gham hai"..  
Such a short life indeed...  
Why can't we have a smooth, pleasant life...  
Like this boat ride on the waters  
Of this city of glass...?

# A LETTER TO MY SELF

**LAXMAN RAO**

Self-care is a rite while self-love is a ritual,  
a daily custom to be nourished & nurtured,  
a way of life to be a part of its living & being,  
love thy more, than what thy seek in other's love!

You are conscious of your co-found being,  
your conscientiousness in awakening.  
Come into your awareness and observance,  
as you are the very verse of the vast universe.

The beauty of life and love is a personification,  
lead thy life with thine fine exemplars,  
for you are as beautiful as your life and living,  
as it's an art and science of your well-being.

Love thy self with wellness, grace, and gratitude,  
while honoring the body, its presence & fineness.

# "OUTSTRETCHED ARMS..."

**MADHUMATHI. H**

As the Sky opens the door for another dawn  
The Earth smiles in gratitude  
For the Sunshine, light, new colors...  
The sky is exploring all possibilities  
To thank the Earth  
For the warm welcome each day  
In magical forms, mesmerizing hues, patterns, textures, scents...

Contemplating, the sky  
Softly rolled over, a myriad times  
Gifting canvas' of vibrant art  
Across the blue  
In yellow, pink, orange  
And crimson shades, till dusk  
Signed in symbols, at the corner  
As a luminous golden circle, a million glow-worms, shimmering celestial  
flowers...

The synonym of Oneness, infinitely brimming gratitude  
Constantly expressed by Nature  
In the sweetest of blossoming silences  
Fragrant hues, miracles, tiny wonders, magic, Metamorphosis  
And some downpours too...

But Man! A part of Nature  
Often fails to be grateful

With his opaque curtains of ego, greed  
That never would allow him to see  
The beauty of love, compassion, giving  
Running like silvery whispering rivers  
Towards the eternal home, the Sea...  
If only we learn to surrender to Nature, the benevolent mentor  
Our world would soak in unadulterated joy...





# THE POEM AND THE PEN

**K. MONIKA**

A poem, a line connecting thoughts and words.  
We write of things, though they may seem absurd.  
We envision the future, revive the past,  
With words and dreams boundlessly vast.

Every poem, a journey, each word, a tale,  
Every verse charted on its unique scale.  
No matter the place—train or bus,  
Our pens become a solace for us.

We reveal the unseen, speak the unspoken,  
Heal the heart that's broken.  
At times when life leaves us without any clue  
With the pen and the art, we build a bond so true,

They call it a poem, a fleeting phase,  
But I see a soul, yearning for praise.  
Every piece is alive, a living theme  
And every word we write is a part of our dream.

# BETWEEN WHAT I FEEL AND WHAT I FEAR

**NEHA S CHAKRAVARTHI**

Deep into the sea, in waters uncharted,  
Yet perhaps far off, you recognise my sail,  
Moments too precious to last, turn my compass,  
Through many nautical miles before I can see you.  
With tides that take me farther into the twilight's dark,  
My sail flailing loud amidst the wrap of calm,  
Yet, not knowing how to mean something without saying it,  
Ineffable secrets, I whisper when words falter.  
Where passion meets longing, my journey unfolds,  
Pronouncing me free from the tangible mess I was in.

# I STUMBLED UPON A MEMORY

**NEHA S CHAKRAVARTHI**

I stumbled upon a memory,  
Long buried in the past,  
In the dusty attic that bears  
The warmth of the forgotten memory.

Lost and found, it stirs a harmless flame -  
With it, faded the scent of lilacs in fall,  
The sweet joys of life I lost to time.  
Yet, it lingers still.  
There are days I can't reclaim  
What lives on in my heart.

Bygones woven tightly apart from the present,  
Stitches running between every smile, every tear  
Through all the fragments that remained.  
Perhaps, for all the time that's fled,  
There's beauty in the echoes of what we shared.

# HARMONISING SUCCESS OVER THE FAILURE

**PARVINDER NAGI**

Lurking in the shadows are the fears of past  
A light of hope glimmering in the midst of failure  
Dreams unfulfilled, struggles unsuccessful  
Leaving in a disappointment and bizarre

Walking hand in hand success and failure  
Learning from mistakes of each other  
Saying goodbyes to the bends of life  
Adding joy to the paths anew

Mending the pieces through the gentle thoughts  
Never to give up the melancholy of success  
Touching some ephemeral endings  
Harmonising success over the failure!

# RISE FROM THE ABYSS

PREMA MURUGAN

They drag you to the edges,  
Push you into the darkest abyss,  
From where no one hears your shout,  
With every hope overrun, you feel lost.

They will blame you for your fall,  
Mock you if you dare to crawl,  
Belittle you, so you never stand tall.  
You start doubting your worth,  
Regretting even your birth.

But rise, though bruised by bitter blame,  
Your heart's a spark, a steady flame.  
The ones who scorned will never know—  
The power beneath your quietness will show.

# DOESN'T REALLY MATTER

**PRIYALAKSHMI GOGOI**

She's a woman with a heart of gold  
All along she has been so strong and bold  
She has seen life's twists and turns  
Also its unexpected blows and burns.

She is a woman who is strong mentally  
Does all things differently  
She believes in her self-worthiness,  
She never lets go off the key to her happiness.

Someone else's opinion doesn't affect her worthiness  
She doesn't allow those to ignite her sadness.  
There will be many to point out her fault  
But other's opinions never put her life in halt.

Her strength they say is her weakness  
But she knows they only reflect their keenness.  
She remains focused to become stronger and better  
Those opinions she doesn't pay heed nor do they matter.

She is the writer of her own story  
Other's judgements and opinions has got nothing to do with its glory  
She doesn't need them to validate her existence  
She is far away from any kind of pretence.

Opinions there will be many  
A strong woman will not try to stop any  
Amidst those she will be victorious and move on  
Inspiring and brightening the path she will tread on.

# WHY IS IT SO?

**RAJANI MULA**

What's your aim? Is building a weak nation your goal?  
If not, where are your solutions to make us whole?  
Why are children left to ruin, with no guidance in sight?  
Why isn't there a ban on destructive activities that ignite?

What's stopping you from stopping the destruction and pain?  
Every household is a victim of vicious cycles and strain  
Every lane has witnessed perilous youth, lost and astray  
Every darkness is afraid of the dark future that's on its way

The sun is burning, scorched by the brutality of our youth  
Why can't we make a decision to stop this destructive truth?  
Is living a life of fraud and deceit the new fashion trend?  
We all know where the problem lies, but none dare to amend

We all know where progress awaits, but none choose to pursue  
Will we rise to the challenge, or forever be stuck in this rue?

# HAIKU

**RANDY BROOKS**

break in the clouds  
our pinhole  
eclipse

# USHERING IN 2025

**ROOPA SUBRAMANI**

Ushering in 2025, new year signaling new beginnings,  
mind refreshed, heart happy harnessing lofty tidings,  
hope hoisted, faith rekindled foretelling grace-full happenings,  
grand ideas, wholesome intentions ensuring success of all things,  
viable dreams, consistent self-effort impelling worthy undertakings,  
self-reflection through meditative contemplation igniting deep knowings,  
universal peace and prosperity through unconditional love and concern for all  
fostering mutual understandings,

Ushering in 2025, new year signaling new beginnings  
with a sense of utmost gratitude for all inevitable endings,  
and healthy resolutions with realistic expectations inviting infinite blessings!



# WISDOM OF THE ORIENTS

## SAIPRAKASH KUNTAMUKKALA

I often wonder at the latest revelations  
Those were very much there in ancient scriptures  
Not all may stand the test of modern calculations  
But a few does stun  
Let me try to focus on some  
The concept of Vimana (aeroplane)  
The exact distance between the Earth and the Sun  
Ancient remedies for wellness  
As elucidated in Ayurveda  
Techniques of medicine and surgery  
Theories of evolution in the form of Dasavataras (10 incarnations)  
Demarcation of body and soul  
Mind and psyche  
Chants for universal well-being  
Yagnas and Homas (sacred fire ritual)  
These and many more  
Ancient wisdom and modern science should go hand in hand  
Complementing each other  
Rather than trying to prove each other wrong  
Afterall they both aim at the welfare and progress of human life  
Not to forget the environment and the universe in general  
May the best minds prevail.

# WORDS.. NOT ENOUGH

**B.S. SAROJA**

Nebulous perimeter of consciousness  
cleverly disguise the enormous mind's hard edges  
giving the impression of a natural grace!

Since they are invisible  
easily camouflage themselves within the strong walls!

All the answers are just a heartbeat away  
Yet the heart is not ready to accept the reality!  
Like an adamant child it craves for emotional equilibrium!

Words in motion  
Compilation  
of emotions  
that assemble in the banquet hall of mind!

It's a very difficult task to  
hold a single multidimensional mirror to have a look at our greater than life  
consciousness!

Words are too fragile to take our mind into the deeper depths of the immense  
ocean of creation!

# BLACK CAM

## SETALURI PADMAVATHI

The green world amidst hills and deep valleys  
The musical fountains and flowing waterfalls  
A treat for my eyes, soul, and longing mind!  
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam,  
When you show alluring beauty around me!

I'm tired of physical and mental pains  
And my heart finds solace and solitude here  
Towards rhythmic brook and rusty lands  
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam,  
When you show riveting beauty around me!

A gentle breeze brings jasmines' fragrance  
Whistling wind sings a sweet welcome song  
The flowing lake lets me feel the real serenity  
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam,  
When you show startling beauty around me!

The Rocky Mountains lie beside lovely streams,  
Refreshing water kisses my frail tender feet  
Chirping blue birds welcome me from afar  
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam,  
When you show enthralling beauty around me!

Swaying branches set a soft swing ahead  
Lush green orchards always enchant me  
How blessed I am to be in the lap of nature!  
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam,  
When you show engrossing beauty around me!

O dear! I beg you not to leave your black cam  
I wish for more fantasy in pictures around  
Paint the frames with rainbow colours ahead!  
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam,  
When you show thrilling beauty around me!

# A MOMENT IN TIME

SHALINI NANDKEOLYAR

It was a quiet twilight -  
Love drenched, waiting  
For the dew to drizzle,  
moon beam's soothing kiss  
A magical spell of unravelling  
mysteries, the hour enchanted.  
The breeze held its breath  
A silent lull as it listened  
To the tree's soft whispers -  
I will gather you in my womb  
In another moment in time.  
Until then, rest in the fragrance  
Mother Earth's lap, Her bosom  
Of infinite love and compassion.  
Let the rain bathe you, the sun  
caress you, hold you in a warm  
embrace...I will watch over you  
For I am in you, a bond eternal.  
The leaf nodded, rustled a little.  
The moon smiled as the wise tree  
Released her trembling autumn  
leaf soaked in a halo of love  
The sky wept silently, tears of joy.  
The night sang its sweetest melody.

# THE PUZZLE

## SHALINI SAMUEL

A dark canvas  
spreads beyond my eyes  
The fabric is full of mystery,  
I wish I could touch and feel it.  
Galaxies dance in an ageless rhythm,  
Guided by unseen forces.  
The sun is a leader, the moon my friend,  
Planets spin to stay in place.

Comets carry ancient tales,  
That time once wrote on earth.  
Black holes whisper in the void,  
A secret song that no one hears.

Gravity binds and time expands,  
The universe writes its own rules.  
We gaze in awe but have little wisdom,  
Of its depth and vastness.  
Amidst the endless life of the cosmos  
I wish I could find my answers.  
And see the unseen dimensions.  
Each star is a clue, a thread; I know  
But I am not a genius  
The vast puzzle overhead is beyond me.

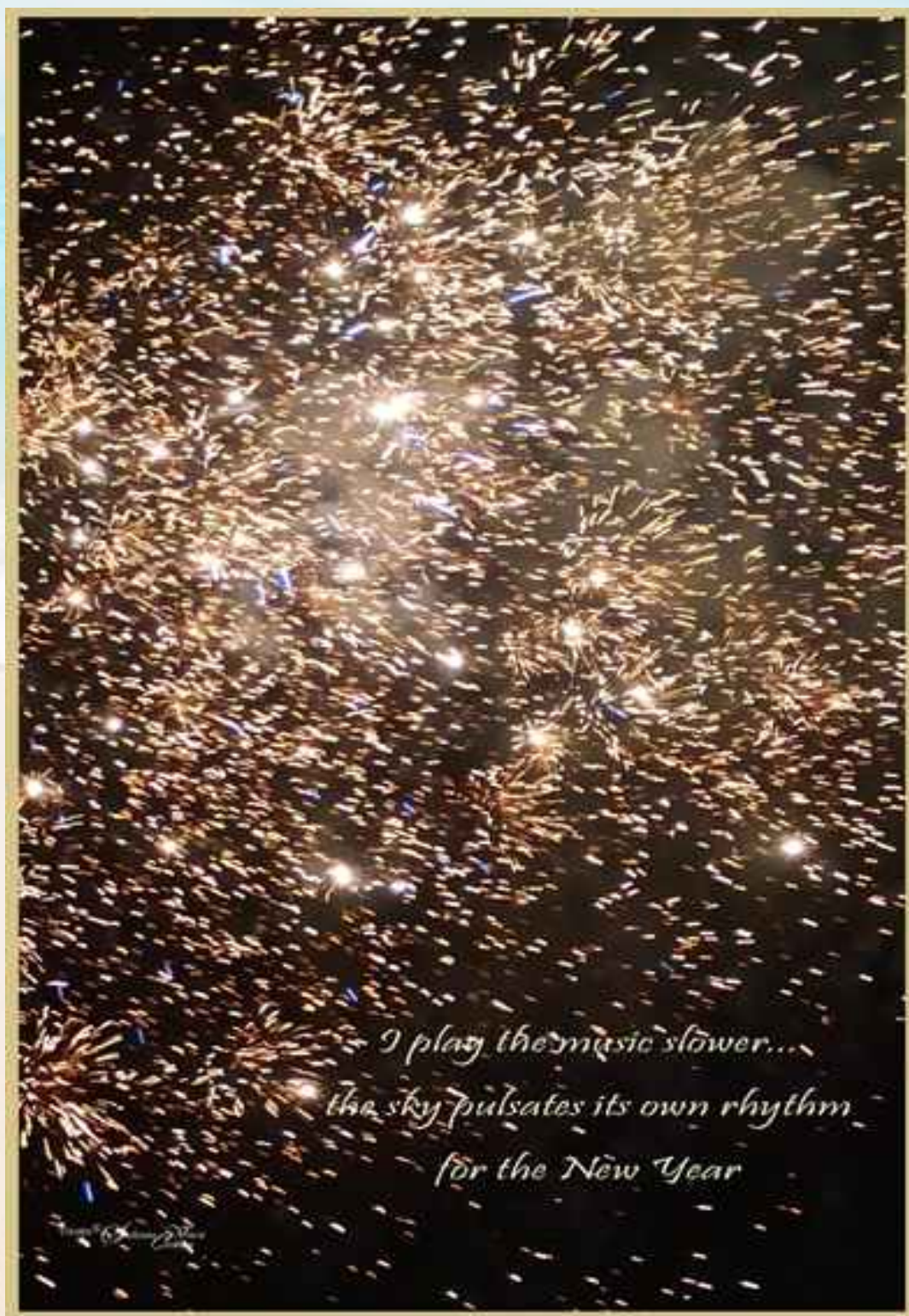
# ***haiku - short form poetry originated in japan***

**STELIANA CRISTINA VOICU**

dressing the chiffon dress  
for the New Year's Eve Night...  
which star will bring my prince?

***haiga - a work consists of one haiku and  
one paint, brush, ink or photo***

**STELIANA CRISTINA VOICU**



# PEACE-THE CRADLE OF SUCCESS

**THIRUPURASUNDARI C J ( DAZZLE )**

Through muddy Waters,  
Yet the florescence so beautiful,  
Oh! U Lotus,  
Radiant and graceful,  
Grasping life with a heart or head?  
Power to mindfully act,  
Inner peace- the energy qualitative,  
Embracing the changes, the disarray,  
Yet, thriving with compassion,  
Calm the storm,  
For the harmonial co-existence.

# NEVERLAND'S WHISPERS

**VAISHNAVI SAMANTARAY**

Neverland, a place where dreams unfold,  
A magical world of wonder, forever to be told.

The Lost Boys' laughter echoes free,  
As they battle with pirates, wild and carefree.

Tinker bell's light flickers bright,  
Like a beacon in the night.

As Captain Hook's pirate ship sails the sea,  
A symbol of danger for all to see.

The Boy who never grew up resides,  
Peter Pan, with a heart full of pride.

In Neverland's secret gardens, where fairies dance and play,  
The magical flowers bloom, in a colourful display.

The mermaids' sweet melodies, as they sing in harmony,  
Lure us to the underwater world, of wonder and symphony.

In Neverland's hidden caves, where ancient secrets sleep,  
The fairies whisper magic spells, when moonlight starts to creep.

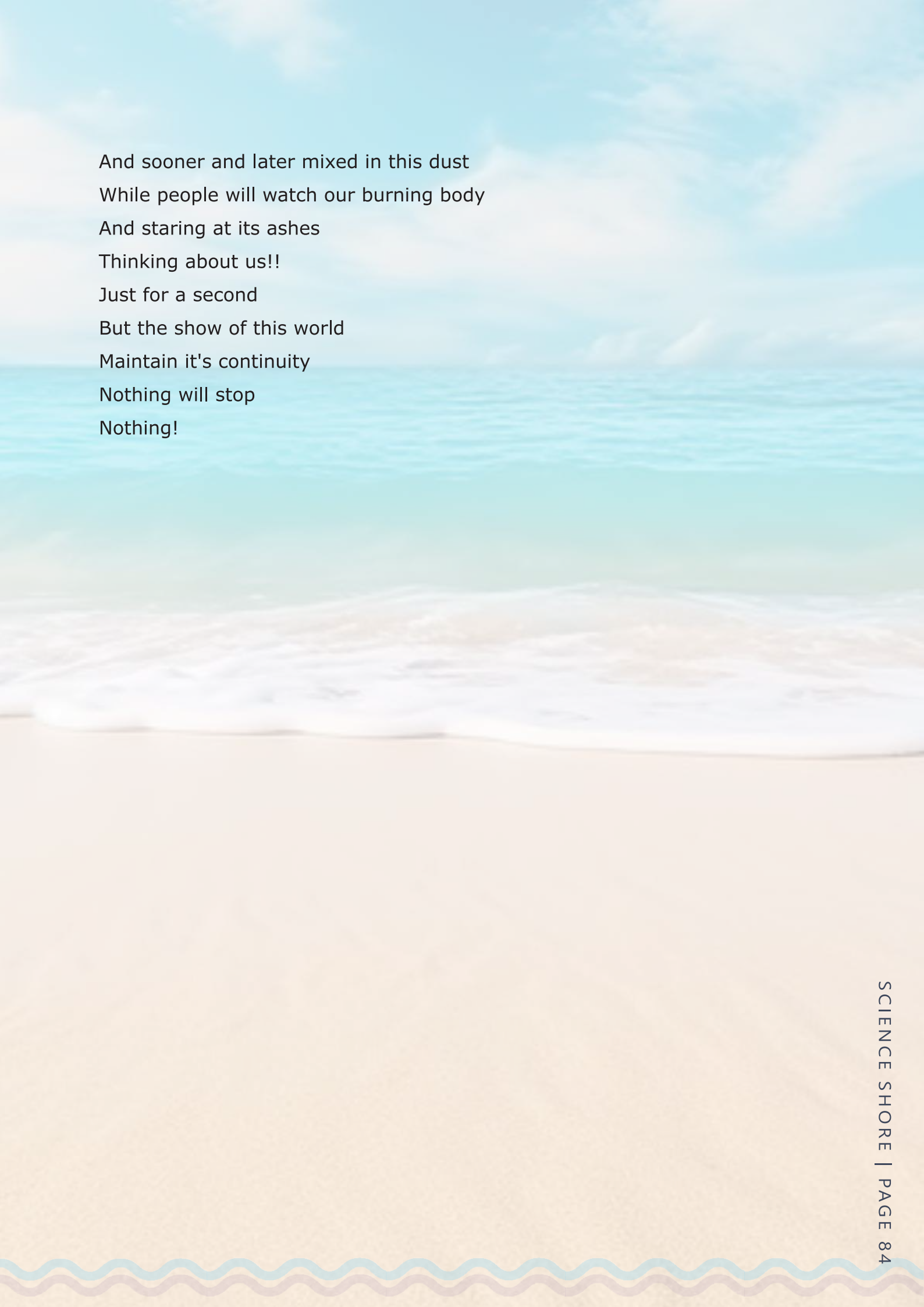
In this magical land of enchantment and dreams.  
Where time stands still, and laughter beams,

Neverland's spirit forever will remain  
A place where childhood magic will forever reign.

# CONTINUOUS LIFE CYCLES

**VARSHA SARAN**

We are burning on the pyre of worries  
That ends till the fire of our funeral  
Our unconscious mind  
Is somewhere  
Fully reserved with the chain of tensions  
Nobody is fully relaxed  
Our brain is stretched  
Just like an elastic  
And working unlimited  
Till our last breath  
Why!!!  
For our common desires and needs  
For two-time bread, clothes and shelter  
We ignore our creativity  
Our peace of mind  
Forgot our Divine  
Just because, to collect such materials!!  
That will be scattered here and there  
In our rooms  
In our Veranda  
Some scraps on the roof  
Left behind us,  
That proves  
That we shall never take anything with us  
Only some good or bad memories  
printed by us, on others' soul  
Through our behaviour  
We will turn into black carbon



And sooner and later mixed in this dust  
While people will watch our burning body  
And staring at its ashes  
Thinking about us!!  
Just for a second  
But the show of this world  
Maintain it's continuity  
Nothing will stop  
Nothing!

# TOGETHERNESS

**VARSHA SARAN**

In the nights of December  
Frozen lake was crying,  
Under the hard layer of Ice  
Frozen water that is locked  
And sobbing to get free,  
Wants to embrace the sunlight  
Continuous warmth is required...  
To set a good example of togetherness!!  
Togetherness of nature and it's elements is visible here and there  
Like soul and body  
How lifeless this life becomes?  
Without any consciousness!  
Without any gesture!  
Without any feeling!  
Clotted frozen blood, staring eyes  
With departed soul  
Ahhh....  
Crying on its frozen condition  
Like this frozen lake  
Waiting for the warmth of sun!!

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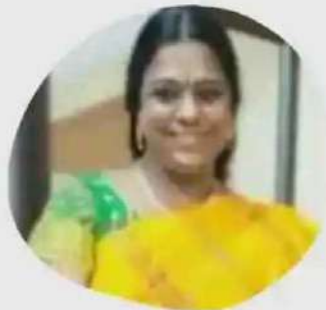
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