



LIPI

APRILIS

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Edited by

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PUBLICATION

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Lipi Publication, collaborated with Lipi Magazine, is a book publishing platform, is looking for literary works from every part of the World that are thoughtful imaginings, inspiring events, and various facts based on trending topics regarding daily life, nature, love, suffering, pandemic, travels, food, culture, and many more.

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Dedicated to all the People who are helping
and fighting against Covid-19

*“The air soft as that of Seville in April, and so
fragrant that it was delicious to breathe it.”*

—Christopher Columbus

“April hath put a spirit of youth in everything.”

—William Shakespeare

“April is a promise that May is bound to keep.”

—Hal Borland

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Preface

Aprilis is the Latin name for the month of April, a name of charm and extraordinary beauty in the nature.

The month-long collection of submissions in the Lipi Magazine is now in this e-book format.

The wide range of collection will certainly give the readers the opportunity to taste different flavours of writings including Poem, Flash Fiction, Short Story, Article and also One Act Play.

The show must go on.

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Aaron Pamei

WALK LIGHT

Tread light,
Do not stride.
Hover,
Never settle.
It doesn't make sense
To be stuck
When everything
shifts and rolls.
Don't think
That you know better,
Your help
Might be killing him.
Your light
Is only for you,
To others
It blinds their sight.
Ego hides
Behind goodness,
Service is
Eventually self-serving.
Minimise,
Don't promote yourself.
You pollute
It's in our nature.
When you die,
Leave no trace.
Legacy
Is your greatest conceit.

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Achingliu Kamei

WILL

When I die bury me beside my mother
Under the mahogany tree she planted
Beside the fishpond father dug in his youth
A peach tree to shade me and my brother
Mountain crocus on my headstone.

Anthurium for mother, sunflower for papa
Let them dance, twirl, and sway in the breeze
Place a kettle and a bamboo flute
Let it bubble and hum under the blue sky
Let the iris be my eulogist.

My coffin be of bamboo,
Let me turn to soil soon, nutrients for spring
Tombstone reads "See you at The House".
I had loved well. I'm at peace.
A seat and a swing near my grave.

Residuary, pecuniary, specific, reversionary
I have none. I leave behind love and pain
Love for all creatures, respect for nature
Empathy for the weak and poor
I hope I've carved my name on some hearts.

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DIGGERS AND LIGHTERS

Logs, incense, prayers, bodies, flames
the smoke – defiantly rising, its grey heart twisting upwards,
merging with sun’s glow
courage- the men toiling away
day and night, night and day
undocumented, unafraid, undeterred, loyal
who could blossom in ashes and wilted flower beds-
the diggers, the lighters.
digging hard the unyielding ground
twigs, leaves, discarded PPEs, plastics and stones obstruct
too worn by the sheer number of times they raised their spades
their own griefs, hunger and desperation clinging on them
toiling away in sloshing mud and baked earth, all year long,
forgotten.
before their calloused hands healed,
hundred more bodies brought in by the truckloads-
escorted by people in cloaks of white and blue
their faces shielded by masks and glasses
majestic processions, a thing of the past
motionless in their body bags, they knew their loved ones
were not there to shed a tear
the diggers’ sweat running down emaciated face and arms
neglected- like the bodies they help reach the finish line
where the rich, the poor, the powerful, the helpless,
the migrant, the native, the strong, the weak, the blind, the needy
the old, the infirm—the meek and young
or it might even be me or you
all congregate- where desires and dreams die.

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SUMMER WAVES

Soft breeze flows in the open window,
On a calm? morning,
The silence broken by a piercing siren,
The ambulance hurtling down the road,
Adding to the numbers
A mother, a father, a son, a daughter
In random order, no longer statistics
A friend, a face of a loved one.

Staring out the window, looking for a soul
Deserted roads, leading to no particular destination,
Searching for an oasis, a green patch for a choked lung
Last days of spring coming to an end,
Giving way to the summer waves
A lull after the first wave, then the second, third
In a horrific rush, bodies tumbling into pits,
Onto pyres, in a rush, pushed over the edge,
Not ready, dreams not fulfilled, no time to say goodbyes,
Denied of dignity in death.

The tsunami of disasters
Ushered in untold grief by the apathy of the ones,
Who should have been responsible?
Scurrying, scrambling with the dogs, and animals,
For the ephemeral fame, to immortalize? a puny life.
Careful culling by the power, strategizing
Cultivating selfishness, materialism
In the garb of bringing development
Economy precedence take, self-glorification,
Leaving a path of destruction and death
In his quest to become a god.

Ananya Chatterjee

A Hard Lesson

I looked at the mirror and quivered,
The quakes weren't reflected—
I saw a face of stone:
Carved beautifully, rounded,
Chubby and mature.

An experienced lady,
Solid, dependable, serious, and
Sophisticated to the core.
The little girl in me—
Dishevelled, cried in horror.

Ashok Kumar

FUTURE ...

Who knows?

What's written for our life?

Live in present wait for beams bright

Don't destroy present

Why do invite strife?

He knows what's suitable for life?

Why do we spoil valuable tears?

Work hard, nothing is in our hands; don't fear

I saw the poors to be brands

History is full of tales

If we enter into ocean why do have fear from large gales?

Let me see from the dust to the sky

Challenges are tough;

accept them try to cross all hurdles before die

Christopher T. Dabrowski

Immortality

(Flash Fiction)

When immortality was invented, great joy reigned. Unfortunately, for a while. Not everyone could enjoy the infinite prospects of life. As it happens, this luxury was reserved for the wealthiest and noble. Only then geniuses joined the respectable group. Well, how can such potential be wasted?

With time, there was widespread robotization, and immortality became a common good, available from birth. Everybody enjoyed endless life, condemning Death to eternal unemployment. The living kept coming and going, they were born and multiplied like rabbits.

And they all intended to live forever!

And only Death committed suicide, thus giving up inborn immortality

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A Wet Week

(Flash Fiction)

You will have a very wet week. Really. On Monday cesspool will pour. As if that was not enough, in a neighbor upstairs there will be a flood that will flood your entire flat. That is not enough of the attractions. The neighbouring river will change into raging element – Flood of century awaits you: floods fields, floods farmyards, undermines the foundations, sinks the basements and then entire ground floor. A succor will not soon come – especially that for the last three months of holiday will be constantly raining. Fortunately, you are not moving. Keep it up! Despite all these catastrophes, despite rough rains, anyhow, you will jump to the lake to swim with passionate undines. Because you are Aquarius.

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Madman

(Flash Fiction)

A man was acting like he was mad. Passers-by reacted differently. Some pretended they didn't see him, others were laughing and pointing fingers at him. Some even poked him aggressively. The man didn't pay attention to it, at first he cried with emotions, then screamed and a moment later he laughed to tears, to abdominal pain, in a moment he was sad, next merry, scared, embarrassed. They considered him a madman but they did not know! He was extremely sensitive because he had an extraordinary gift. He could watch people's minds – feel them! It was like amplified, one-way telepathy. He watched what was happening in their heads like a movie. And he experienced it extremely... extremely intensely.

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When the Glamour of Love Fades

There were so many crazy moments between us!
Moments full of sun, happiness and love!
So many beautiful words were said, so many statements
Ah, we had countless common dreams
More than there are rabbits in a warren!
So much passion, tenderness, kisses!
And then... Then something started to break.
First the soup was too salty. Too salty...
Next it was about coming home too late
And then it started...
What? It's embarrassing to tell.
All in all, had to get used to it,
Bite the bullet and last, persist, survive.
An unceasing hiding started...
Disguising a black eye, a dissected lip
And the worst was when a bruise bloomed on a cheek.
God, what have I done to you that woman beats me?

Debabrata Das

Thou Enlighten Thyself from Within Thyself

The night is shrouded with darkness everywhere-
With nearly nothing to see anywhere,
Floating we still as though on flying something
Floating- floating and still floating-
But whither we go we know nothing,
All crowding, fumbling and stumbling
Screaming hollow meaningless and groaning
With chest swelling all we boasting
And bragging and scheming all the while
Groaping blindly as all as a guile
In up above the deep dark sky
The distant lone star twinkling high
Grumbling in grave gracious voice there-
“Enlighten thyself enlighten with sense superior
Look at thyself in slow meditation,
Discover thou thyself even in busy motion
Thou all enlighten thyself from within with inner sense
And perceive truths yet unravelled with conviction intense.

Gayatri Devi Borthakur

The Potato Eaters *

(Sentence)

The Potatoes are wearing the caps of the civilization.

(Subject)

The aristocratic society moulds if the caps are n't there.

(Predicate)

A belch of hunger = Basic need

To wear the caps = The Primitive habit.

*The famous painting of Vincent Van Gogh.

Indrani Datta

Destiny

Destiny! Destiny! Destiny
O destiny! don't kill me
So mercilessly.

The sky is full of clouds
That are too heavy to bear.
Give me some hopes.

I wanna hear the sound
Of raindrop at midnight,
Wanna see the charming
fountain that falls into the
sandy brook.

There is still more to feel,
O the humming of bees!
So melodious!

O destiny spreads your another
hand of prosperity, there are
still thousand pages are left
to write a great poesy.

Iolanda Leotta

That's my belief

The waves of the bubbling sea,
crash on the cliff,
then on the foreshore,
rewound, push back,
drag along debris,
flows impetuously
it's a danse macabre,
on the sand emerge
the soaked wrecks of a tragic past.
Nothing can stop the supernatural fury
of the weaves.

The naval battles, the showdown
between pirates and sailors,
the horrible death of floating bodies
storm-tossed by the weaves.
The beginning of the end is relentless
death spares no one,
who will ever find a cure for death!
Scientists and philosophers try to solve
the enigma "The origin of life",
but they don't realize that the formula
is in the mind of the Supreme Being,
"The Almighty".

Mankind! you're clutching at straws.
no one can challenge
the Supreme intelligence,
the Universal Father.
Only you "Poetry", sublime expression

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of the deep motions of the soul,
the hidden feelings, the intense emotions
caused by tragic events,
I dare firmly say that your soul will survive,
Imperishable like the poet's spirit,
Indomitable.
Can you tell me what it means to die!
It's when you close your eyes forever,
fall into a deep sleep
and keep on dreaming eternally.

Abnegation

The last bell tolls of the church,
not very far from my home,
echo, roar, the resonances
around the country hears, remind:
it's time to pray,
but how many people
turn to the creator to be blessed.
It's midday, it's almost lunch-time,
but who for a moment will remember
those who can't feed,
The philanthropy, the charity,
if it exist yet,
few people want to pursue it,
simple souls ready to donate
without expecting love in return,
ready to die for a worthy cause,
without receiving glory and honor.
But what are awards and honors
If you're a despicable person,
an impostor,
that using the cunning of the fox,
subjugate the lambs
for personal purpose.
Among the ashy doves that flaw,
stand out one snow-white,
that often settles on the bell tower,
It symbolize the utopian, futuristic,
"universal peace", impossible to achieve.
There's a need of mutual love
but people die with selfishness, alienation,
bad mood.

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It's evening, the last bell tolls
announce the "Hail Mary",
I think to the self-abnegation,
I see my mother's tears,
when she kneel to worship
"The Madonna of the sea",
sculpted by her son, on the garden wall.
It seems to say:
"Mother! I'll never leave you,
How can I forget you and live on
you gave me life so many times".

Kapardeli Eftichia

FROZEN FLOWER

I wander on earth
And the flame of the lamp
In this century that is passing
the white winters it marks

The river that mirrors
In the waters of life
He speaks slowly and whispers
And in the unknown seabeds
It is always lost at dawn

Rose trees
Soft souls, your two closed eyes
They give the return done
Out of virtue and love

The dream carves the sky
And he weaves the stone
The moon is always late
But the fat red pomegranate
Your tender body

Water on a rainy night
Fill the memory with you
You became sound, you became pulse
Praise and treasure
The most beautiful flower
In the icy juice of the earth

Kehinde Olaitan Onike

IKOKO AKUFO

(LAMENTATION FOR A BROKEN POT)

“Her beads, while she dances don’t go in sync with other maidens’

She doesn’t whine her waist like she used to

Why does it feel as though her beauty is fading?

Are you sure she’s still a virgin?”

These were the words of the Elders.

“What’s with the constant fever?

Why is she looking all bloated suddenly?

Is morning sickness not a sign of pregnancy?

You better talk to your daughter!”

Those were the words of her father.

“Aduke mi, What have you gotten yourself into?

Who is the father of the child?

Why jeopardize your career because of 5-minute fun?

You are supposed to be married in a fortnight, remember?”

Her mother couldn’t stop the endless questioning.

“I didn’t wish for this to happen

My virginity I swore to you to protect

But it was taken from me without my consent

I told you but you didn’t believe me”.

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Those were Aduke's words that wasn't heard while she lived.

“We were all decently dressed
Yet, we were devoured
We were in the church
Yet, they say we stayed out late
We stayed home
And they still found themselves a flimsy excuse for doing it
Some of us spoke up
Yet, justice was not served
Some kept it to themselves
And it did more damage than we imagined
Just like Aduke, I and many others
We've died in many ways than I can count”.

These are my words, our words and our choice that it should be voiced.

Kolawole Mathew Ogundipe

Red on the Flag

Blood-stained streets everywhere,
 Precious blood
Of God's precious creatures
Covered all over the houses, streets,
Market squares and motor parks.
Souls lost every day,
One class of birds against another
Still, the leader of all birds
 Remains silent,
Turning hearing ears
Away from the chaos and violence
Among all birds.
Any emerged Samaritans
Among one class of birds,
Willing to save their class,
Open their eyes in prosecutions
 And troubles
From the leader of all birds.
Any self-willing messiah
That intends to iron out
The chaos and violence
Among all birds
Pours water into a basket.
 And earlier,
Its integral part, the white
 But now,
Splashed with the red!
Colourless flag it became!

The Rare Amnesty

No amnesty can be
Likened to this
The amnesty in His name
And in His sacrifice on the cross
No amnesty can be
Likened to this
The amnesty in our true confession
And in our acceptance of Him!
No amnesty can be
Likened to this
The amnesty that is not
Based on tribe
No amnesty can be
Likened to this
The amnesty that is unfettered
By nepotism
No amnesty can be
Likened to this
The amnesty that is not
Based on a certain few
Number of people;
“But to as many as did receive HIM”,
Have this kind of amnesty!
The limitless amnesty
Similar not to that of the world!

Blue All Over!

Blue paints the entire world!
Moral of just morals shattered,
Morale befouled,
Impiety gives its reflection
In ocean!
Like the time of Sodom and Gomorrah,
There is lust everywhere,
And as it happened
In the beginning
When God created man
To be the portrait of Him;
But turned contrary by man
That made God depressed then,
Similar to this exists
In abundance nowadays—
Impurities everywhere!

She Said That She Loved Him

(Short Story)

Putting down the account of the questionable packed and structured single love between them, I think, is something that is pleasant sad to ears! Not to be ignored is the love which other scattered individual chain of flesh emulate in bringing together themselves and their associative soldier (ants) in this lonely world we found ourselves, where no one cares not for others except one's companioned soldier on the battle field of life. Both sexes of human need a true love in which their individuals can confide themselves and draw near their happiness and joy, of which will be the sources of both physical and spiritual success, blessings and breakthrough to them. Should we say she loved him that way? Is the love she claimed to have had for him really genuine? In what way can we best describe her love for him? And how can we describe authentic love?

Earlier said I that worthy it would be to account for their love during their togetherness of existence, they dated each other for five annual time before they finally broke their mace of love. Adekola and Temidayo met in a company where Adekola worked. Then, Temidayo came to the company to work as an intern for her academic course of study. When they met, Adekola felt that he should try his luck before her. This was because he deeply had feeling for her but not sure whether she would append her signature to his proposal. After expressing his feeling to her, and her positive response thereafter, though she had not said yes then, it was as if Adekola was in a new world as he was very glad that he had seen a lady who would be the source of joy and a help mate to him in life. So, he tried his best, exhibiting all the effort at

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his reach to make her happy, and for her to reason with him by being considerate about his love toward her. Innumerable calls he did make! Countless number of physical contacts between the two of them; all prompted by him in order to draw her mind near him, and also, to win her love and affection to himself. Love is unpredictable at times. No one knows the direction it faces—whether it is the left side it faces, whether it is the right side it faces, whether it is the front it faces or whether it is the back it faces; this becomes a riddle to all humans. Therefore, at some points during his follow-up activities on his marriage proposal to her, Adekola allowed despair to rule his mind. To him, were encouragements from friends and seasoned ones on the issues relating to relationship and marriage. This did lighten the burden of despondency in Adekola’s mind during that time.

Fortuitously, Temidayo came back to the company after her graduation in school to work as a permanent worker. Adekola was very happy to her decision to work in the same company HE worked. “Even though she has not accepted my marriage offer, I will be having discussions with her every time”, he often said this before his friends. They continued their friendship in the same work place with a lot of discussions and deliberations. Adekola showed true love to her through his cares and attention to her, and he never hide anything for her. He pampered her with the little he had; just to express to her, his feeling and how he would take care of her if she accepts and marries him. At very long last, she said YES to his proposal after one year and a quarter. Adekola was delighted with this; at least, the hope of being together as husband and wife was eventually created in him.

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Adekola did not relent in showing his cares and love to her. At this time however, after accepting the offer, he was expecting her to reciprocate the cares and attention he did give to her. This is the hope of every man; after all, they were now in marital relationship and not ordinary friends as they were before. But what amazed Adekola was that his wish was not met by Temidayo. She neither called him nor visited him willingly unless he complained to her. And the more he complained to her about her nonchalance, the more she bore grudge against him! For three days sometimes, she would refuse to pick his calls or meet him for discussion. Once in a while, Adekola regretted that he met such a lady who did not even care about him despite all his effort to make her happy in the relationship. It would have been better if it was only her nonchalance toward him, but the grudge she did bear against him. On several occasions, Adekola would intend to play with her with jokes but Temidayo would change the intention of discourse and turned it to arguments. This made the relationship a hell! Of course, love can be best defined from the perspective of one's patience and endurance toward another person. Peter urged brethren in the Holy Bible to have earnest love among them because love covers over many sins. Can we then say that she really loved him with those attitudes? She did verbally say to him that she loved him when they were together anyway. But I perceived that love as a horse that was drawn on a paper, where is the actual actions of such a horse?

Kruti Desai

Unfortunately, I lost to be a Mimesis!

(Confessional Poem)

Though the little I have adopted,
I called it mine accept the norm though forgotten,
I charged of being insincere,
Let it be, thought I, am the only Crayon mere.

Virtual sense enforce blissful lost in reminiscence,
But painted colours with artificial apparition,
Taking all as mine, observed all the parameters, seems of
no right of care takers,
Realized later, have crossed the measures of bind.

Feigned source replaced with another interpreted mourn &
crime,
Flying like an Eagle so high,
Forgot worries of fall with no survive.

I am the law, witnessed illustration with deep flow,
A sudden rise leads me somewhere in keen blow,
A blindfolded shine dagger deep into my mind to show,
It has started my Doom's Day, when I felt that Change
Undergo!

Yes unwittingly, I become the Mimesis,
Menace leads you too to be another Decius,
Any Luck, unfortunately can't save us from a deliberate
Jealous!

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Moses Emehinola

Haikus

Deadly gentle beasts
Prowling peaceful forest path
Subtly snare the preys.

Strangely silent voice
Only speaking through whispers
Reveals many whys.

Greedy butterflies
Drawn by beautiful flowers' glows
Fly from plant to plant.

Naimuddin Ansary

Lonely Sailor

The most difficult job is to define life,
Like a husband to a newly married wife.
You cannot just predict your future,
As the appearance of a passing shower.
Often, It is to you the abode of pleasure,
It also drags you to dungeon of displeasure.
Have you noticed the change in nature?
Have you seen the barometer of temperature?
Nature in seasons has its different task,
Temperature is too in constant flux.
So is life, it never gets stuck,
Just like the human stomach.
It is a loaded ship sailing on the mid sea,
And you are the lonely sailor to see,
Your own struggle in your own eyes,
Even though the sights are very nice.
Tempestuous winds shake your ship,
The blue water of the sea too is deep,
You are alone in between the air and water,
And you will have to sail now better.
They are the true sailors of life,
Who never stop sailing with the beauty of day and night?

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Shakespeare's Birthday

My mean pen has no ink enough to write,
Of what you have given us – the light.
Your contribution shakes our heart and pierce,
With myriad impressions, emotions, feelings and tears.
We knew men of poverty and power,
In your enchanting literary bower.
We never missed to meet freak and fascinating females,
With their resounding and remorseful tales.
Nor were we deprived of the world of children,
Along with nature's beauty and its dirty drain.
You were a poet, a dramatist and a machine,
To scan people's minds from their skin.
You have left not only your body and mind,
But a huge collection of books to find,
A source of inspiration of a new kind.
You are not dead but alive in our mind,
Your works are your breast and breath,
So long as people keep well their health,
Himalaya is standing tall and erect,
Ganga is flowing without its rhythmic defect,
And people keep reading your valuable texts.
Today is not only one of your birthdays,
But, the occasion of recalling all your glorious days.

Ndaba Sibanda

Seeking Refuge

(Article)

Messages come in many shapes, sizes and colors but what is crucial is how we interpret and implement them.

If friendships, relationships or marriages were scripted like plays and movies, life would not be as dramatic and enigmatic as we know it to be. We write and practice our scripts as we live, love and transition.

I love the sky. How magic it is to marvel at that celestial dome as it towers above the Earth. I begin to visualize daylight and the delight of sightseeing birds and insects as they fly in their sky; I bask in the cordiality and cuddle of the sun, and wander away in a trance into the wonder of the clouds, lightning and rainbows before arriving at the constellations; I then go clubbing with the night and its stars, and the moon (though the stars hog the limelight!); finally I decide to hang out with precious Precipitation's dear family and friends, I mean lovely and lively chaps like Rain, Hail, Drizzle, Sleet and Snow. What fun! No company beats their watery warmth, harmonies and hospitality, I swear!!

I love the wilderness in the form of wild animals, forests, vegetation, rocks, rivers and beaches. These amazingly beautiful things go about their business despite human intervention. Bravo!

APRILIS

People, the preservation of the universe — which is the natural, physical, or material world—is essentially the preservation of life, and this cause is close to my heart.

APRILIS

Those Must Fall

Fetch your tools, let us march and avert further damage
Our gardens are under siege, their greenery despoiled
They are marching, moving en masse as they raid and ruin
They devour just about everything in their wake, in their
path

Fetch your tools, let us march and avert further damage
These destructive pets have no shame, silly insect armies!
Look how they are active at night, attacking our crops and
grass
During the day, wriggling, hiding under our garden
rubbles!

Come, let us take a closer inspection of our plants and
prospects
Look at the armyworm eggs, let beneficial insects feed on
them!
Set our caterpillars on them, hashtag: harmful little
predators
Tell our farmers to take to twitter and twit: armyworms-
must -fall

Onipede Festus moses

You Have Not All

When I consider our journey on earth,
Joy runs down my heart,
That I enjoy the right of childhood,
Mother carries me; she nurtures me
And she feeds me whenever hunger comes
I cry but she lulls me to sleep
The more I enjoy; the more I grow older
But as time flies,
You have not all.

When I grow up to be myself,
The opportunities I enjoy cease to be
I then wonder what could be the bane
I decide not to be a worrywart
Father and mother will say:
We have played our part, you can do yours-
This makes me to have a rethink
That I enjoy childhood may be a right
But adulthood comes with my personal efforts
Here I wonder,
You have not all.

Work they say is an antidote of poverty
I toiled throughout the day to bring food to my table
Though not through sanquinolency,
But the more I try to have more,

APRILIS

The more challenging it becomes
Many desire riches but landed in danger
Must I not reap the fruits of my labour,
After I have toiled the whole day?
Must we say again work is not money?
Now I realize,
You have not all.

Many were born with golden spoon in their mouths
They enjoy the goodies of life
What money cannot buy make them weary
The fruits of the womb make them nothing
They search the nook and cranny for help
But no help comes their way
What the mensches cannot get with their riches,
The smatchets get them on a platter
Now I realize,
I have not all,
You have not all,
We have not all.

The Danger of Taking Shortcut

(Short Story)

One may hear the drumming in the far away thick forest, but if one does not know the source of the drumming, one needs not to venture into it.

In a faraway village, there lived a tall, slim and hardworking man, called Mr Kájolà Sùúrù. He was born and bred in Àfisùúrú village. His wife's name was Àbíké, a short, fat, and hardworking woman with diastema. Mr Kájolà's poverty aggravated to the extent that he could not cater for his family any more. This state of abject poverty made him to have a rethink. One day, he called out his wife. "Àbíké! I know the stress we are passing through this day, and I don't want us to continue with this. An adage says: 'work is an antidote of poverty' I need to make a change", Kájolà enthused. After he had had a conversation with his wife, he set out for a journey he himself didn't know the destination. The journey he embarked on took him a month. As he embarked on the journey, he found himself in a thick forest. This forest was so dark during the day that you could hardly see the sky. While in the forest, he hunted for a game. This served as his source of sustenance in the forest. During his sixth day in the forest, he saw a man, who dressed in farming attire. On his shoulder was a hole and head was firewood and hand was a cutlass. "Who are you?" the farmer asked. "I am a wanderer from a far-a-way village, and I am searching for farming job", Mr Kajola replied. When the farmer heard this, he smiled and moved closer to him. "There is no problem. I am Mr Kòsólú Anímásahun. Your problem is solved", Mr Kòsólú replied with a smiling face.

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The next day, Mr Kájolà was taken by Mr Kòsólú to Mr Ayélabówó, a famous rich man in Ajé land. Mr Ayélabówó used to hire people to work on his farms for a year. After a year he would pay them their dues. Mr Kájolà promised his boss to be hardworking and trustworthy. As he started working, Mr Kòsólú had interest in him and he started encouraging him.

Having spent many years with Mr Kòsólú, Mr Kájolà remembered his family and revealed his intention to his boss. The next day, his boss called on him. “Mr Kájolà, I know you are planning to go home to see your family, and I know you must get all your emoluments. But before you leave for your village, I have this advice for you: “Do you like to be paid for your service or have my advice that will sustain you throughout your life”, the boss asked. Mr Kájolà left his boss’ room in confusion. He meditated on these questions for a week before he approached his boss for a reply.

It was December 23 of that year when everybody was planning for Christmas and New Year celebration, it touched Mr Kájolà to the marrow to the extent that he was desperate to see his family. As he replied his boss to give him a piece of advice, he wanted to give him, the boss was overjoyed. “Young man, I have three advices for you: 1. When you are going back home, do not take a shortcut; you can sleep over and set out for your journey the second day. 2. Do not interfere in what you don’t know anything about. 3. Do not take action when you are angry” the boss advised.

A week after Mr Kájolà had accepted his boss’ advice, he received a loaf of bread as a gift for himself and his family. He then set out for the journey. As he embarked on the journey, he got to a point where two roads meet. Here, he remembered his boss’ first advice of the danger of taking

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short cut. He therefore planned to pass the night in a village. When he got to the village, he introduced himself to an old man he approached, and the man allowed him to pass the night in his ahéré- a kind of hut built on the farmland in the rural areas of West Africa. Around 2 a.m, a noise from the neighborhood woke Mr Kájolà from his slumber and he attempted to open the door to see the cause of the noise. But before he could move out, he remembered his boss' second advice that warned him not to interfere in what he did not know anything about. He quickly woke up the old man he passed the night with and explained what the cause of his inquisitiveness was. The old man told him that he should thank his creator because had it been that he opened the door and moved out, he would have been killed by the notorious madman that used to shout in the village in the mid night. The old man narrated to him many lives that had been wasted by the madman. Mr Kájolà continued his journey when the day broke out.

As Mr Kájolà moved closer to his village, he saw from afar, a young man and his wife. His wife was giving the young man a hug. In annoyance, he wanted to kill him because he saw him as somebody having an affair with his wife. He therefore brought out a gun. As he was trying to load the gun, the third advice given by his boss rang in his hearing. "Do not take action when you are angry", he said quietly. As he moved closer, the wife ran out to meet him. She hugged and kissed him. She collected the loaf of bread from his hand and they all entered their room. After some minutes, the wife explained to him that ever since he left her for an unknown destination, the pregnancy he left her with was the young man he was hugging. She explained further that whenever he missed him, the only solution she had was to find company in her son. Immediately he listened to his wife's

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explanation, he hugged the son and ordered his wife to bring the bread. He narrated to his wife that throughout his stay with his boss what he compensated him with was the loaf of bread he brought home. He therefore decided to break the bread. As he was trying to share the bread, he saw a parcel inside it, and when he opened it, he saw a cheque of 50 million naira. Immediately he saw this, he fell on his feet and started thanking God. He later realised that had he not taken to his boss' advice, he would have collected that humongous sum of money and landed in the hands of the armed robbers and the famous madman he wanted to see where he passed the night. He later told his wife and son the danger of taking shortcut.

APRILIS

ODE TO THE PALM TREE

I

O Arecaceae plant of hot climates!
Your multipurpose endowment,
A blessing to the animates

You're the tree that cure human diseases-
Asthma, leukorrhea, fever, hemorrhoids;
You wipe them out of man's menaces

Where do I lay my head?
Your stem, a shelter for man
And fuel for power

The cooks knows your worth in cooking
Of margarine, baking fat, vegetable ghee
Your oil; the source of luscious foods

Our salivating; your cure for hyposeusia
Your kernel our delicacy honours

II

In solving spiritual problems,
Your presence speaks a million!
Our use of sacred object and offering

Pressing the sap of male inflorescence,
We extracted palm wine-
A cure for fever and vulnerary

Your absence makes man's habitat filthy
Your presence our healthy habitat
How great the power of your broom fibres!

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How will man be healthy?
If your creation is terminated
You're strong in nutrients and small in fat.

The minerals from you makes man fat
Your deficiency; a problem to humanity.

III

Your frond serves an honour
When the Messiah rode to Jerusalem
They shouted: "Hosanna to son of David"

Your frond again,
A shelter and clothes to the deity-
Ògún Lákáayé Osìnmolè; Ògún Onírè

Your frond alone,
The materials for craft-
The beauty of our houses

Your frond; a source of àrokó and àlè-
As West African means of communication
Stops megabytes for making man poorer.

Your decaying leaves; a source of mulch,
And the extracted wax for candles

IV

O wonderful palm tree!
Your roles prove your wonders
As blessed as you are; so you are

Must I ask your creator?
Right from when you are formed
How great are your blessings!

APRILIS

Your entire parts give values to divination
How may man know his life problems?
If not for your magical nut.

Òrúnmílá speaks in metaphysics,
When weariness pushes man to him;
Your seeds; the permutation for solution

You are great tree to behold
You are solution to humanity.

APRILIS

The Innocent Blood

(One Act Play)

Characters: Kòtófò, his son (Àselà), Customs Officers, and the irate mobs.

Costumes: fairly used clothes for Kòtófò, Àselà, other smugglers, and Customs uniforms.

Setting: A village in southwest border area

Act 1 Scene 1

(Kòtófò's home – a two room boys quarters with thatched roof).

Kòtófò: (Talking to his son, Àselà) Àselà! I know you are now matured to take to my advice. I notice this day you don't want to follow me to farm anymore. Farming is our family heritage which every male child must imbibe, but if you refuse to partake in it, do what you can do for a living.

Àselà: (Nodding his head in agreement and smiling) Thank you, baàmi. You have said it all but I want you to know that in this 21st century there are lots of jobs one can do for a living. I had planned to discuss my intention with you concerning this job issue. Baàmi, I am planning to join smuggling business. Some of my mates are into it, and they are making it.

Kòtófò: (Nodding his head reluctantly) Àselà, you can't do that job!

Àselà: Why, baàmi?

Kòtófò: You know you are the only son I have. Smuggling is like 'do and die business.'

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Àselà: (In annoyance) Baàmi, I know but I will surely engage in it.

Kòtófò: Do you have charms?

Àselà: (Smiling) Baàmi, leave that to the gods.

Kòtófò: (In surprise) You mean God?

Àselà: No, baàmi. I mean the gods of Sàngó, Ògún Lákáayé, Èsù Láàgiri Òkò and others.

Kòtófò: My son, you know those gods you are referring to are small gods. Only Almighty God can protect you even though you are protected with charms.

Scene 2

(At the Customs checkpoint)

Customs Officers: (trying to stop the smugglers) Stop there! Wetin de your boot?

Àselà: (zoomed off) Leave the road! Leave the road! Leave the road!

Customs Officers: (shooting sporadically while running after the smugglers) Shoot him! You can't go.

Àselà: (Heading towards bush) Let them shoot. I know nobody can shoot the air. Whatever we command, so shall it be. Èyí tawí fógbón logbón ngbó, èyí tawí fógbà logbà ngbà... Continue shooting.

Customs Officers: (Worried) Where are they?

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Irate Mobs: (Moving towards the Customs Officers) Stop there. You have shed the blood of an innocent student through your stray bullet. Come to see his corpse. You cannot go. Say no to extra judicial killing! We are tired of you people. Stop shedding innocent blood!

(They start beating the Customs Officers until one of the officers is dead)

The end.

The curtain falls.

APRILIS

Simran Tripathi Shringi

The Need oR Greed

Forced her to bleed
Not just the skin
That repeats the sin
It's her soul
That's the charcoal
Burnt in the absence of air
That's the reason of despair
The person who dig it out
Is the "pig" in doubt!
Can be named "black cloud"
Who rains in drains!
His hands never turned black
She is a scapegoat
Who enticed the "wolfish"!
Its' her need to feed
Not the beggar's greed.
The one who sells her soul
Without any justification
She accepts the identification.
Think once who the beggar is?
& who is the king?
Who could have an emperor!
But all sinks
In the eyes of the people
Who doesn't allow her to drapple!
That's her Fable
She is a parable
Hopefully! If I can do something for them
In a world of unattainable
I could attain the identity of women
That's how; we can bow down the "demon".

Subhankar Das

I want to go Back

I want to go back... leaving the era of Modern
Industrialization in that ice of thousands of centuries,

I want to go back... leaving the air conditioning of this
Modern Metropolis in the caves of the mountains,

I want to go back... leaving today's arrogant civilization to
the raw meat civilization,

I want to go back... leaving the glittering restaurant of the
city to the hotel in the deep forest,

I want to go back... leaving the modern permanent
livelihood to the nomadic life,

I want to go back... leaving today's modern concrete paved
highway to the paved road of civilization,

I want to go back... leaving today's various stones flying
palaces to the burnt brick palaces of civilization,

I want to go back... leaving the 'arrogance' of the glittering
world to the 'humanity' of ancient civilization,

I want to go back... leaving the noise of the city in the
solitude of civilization,

I want to go back leaving today's the competition of power
everywhere in the 'equality' of civilization.

SUTANUKA MONDAL

Of Death

Death- a bittersweet mirage
Doting in gray
Dances around the season
Without any clear reason
Nothing can keep it at bay

Death a moment of doom
A veracity, quite excruciating
A recital of eternal kip
A memory to weep
The burning fire
An empty space
The stopped breath
And the blissful dirge
One's faithful companion
Until the end

Tali Cohen Shabtai

Depersonalization

They don't know
Where I came from
I must connect the- leg
With the waist
And the pelvis to the spine

That's the way when items
Are separated from bodies
And an artificial
Lens is implanted
In the – eye.

Who said it's possible to move
Organs
Away from their
Place?

Who said?

Terez Peipins

Romance

1.

The taverna
on the corner street
of Crete,
I sing for the soldier,
my lullaby brings back
mother's breath,
the distant north.

2.

Wine bottle
sweats droplets,
savour the cool taste,
On the rooftop,
we name planes
flying low to LaGuardia,
Duchess, a bright blue,
Belvedere, fast and short.

3.

In the bar in Queens,
the Irish boy
stuffs poems
into his back pocket.

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Gladiolas

The gladiolas, mostly red,
tended with precise care,
dug up each year, planted again,
stand sparse
barely fill the round bed,
the Russian flowers.
my father learned in Siberia,
in contrast to mother's dense
blooms in front
where drivers stop to stare.
Not even one year out,
they're both gone,
Weeds grow tall and thick,
inch out any remains.

APRILIS

Night Bus

The night bus,
reeks of weed and pee,
The bum with the deep
scars, dark eyes
smells of baby powder.
A bag sits on a seat
I think bomb,
He goes for it
pulls out cans of corn
the forgotten
grocery shop,
a treasure,
left behind.

Urmila Bendre

To Be Loved, The Bengali Way

(Article)

Have been recently watching a lot of stuff on OTT – movies, serials. Of the regional language. And discovering what fun it is to switch from a Tamil movie to a Malayalam one – and the Indian ness that envelops them all. (Late to the party!)

In this, one comes across the Bengali movies. Of course, these were chosen through “critically acclaimed” googling, and the ratings.

And discovered a world of love – of how women are loved the Bengali way.

Here are the discoveries –

That two men remain in love with a woman – who is married to a third man – and though rivals in love, remain friends throughout their lives. The husband who comes to know of the recent coming together of his wife and her former lover, sadly and gracefully accepts it. (Choktushkone; Director Srijit Mukherjee).

A woman has walked out on her husband and is now living with another man. The husband who encounters the lover a few times, advises his wife “marry him, he is a good man”; A mother who has had a lover and now a daughter who goes to live with that lover – grieves and accepts it. (Aami Ashbo Phirey; Director Anjan Dutt).

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A husband who comes to the house of his wives' lover, and they talk of what happened, what they did to the love of their life. It's not a happy dialogue nor a comforting one. But it reveals the dynamics of relationship in an intimate way and portrays the woman – idealistic, impulsive, and extremely beautiful, broken hearted- through their eyes. (Teenkahon; Director Baudhayan Mukherji).

An older man, who through chance has a young girl staying over at his place, keeps the maturity of being older by letting go of her. (Finally Bhalobhasha; Director Anjan Dutt).

Not to forget the movie of the Tagore family. Though with the limitations of having to portray Tagore in a strict not to be touched way – manages to convey through the excellent Konkana Sen, the love between her – a sister-in-law – and Tagore. With fluidity, poetry, gentleness, without taking away the fact that it is love that is both of this physical world and of the imagination – of poems, writings, intellectual arguments, and daily intimacies. (Kadambari; Director Suman Ghosh).

And the movie where a young girl with little experience of the world is exposed through the gentlemanly but misplaced trust of her husband – to his friend who is politically ambitious and knows ways of seduction way beyond her understanding. “bhediya ghar le aya uska pati” (‘her husband invited a wolf to his house’ – my inner dialogue). (Ghawre Bairey Aaj; Director Aparna Sen).

One is enchanted.

Then I turn to potboilers. A movie about guptdhan (Durgeshgorer Guptodhon; Director Dhruvo Banerjee). And the Bengali movie has not yet lost its innocence. The villain is a true villain – laughs like one, but does not do anything

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to the heroine beyond holding her wrist to a snake (!). The whole movie is the experience of old fashioned story telling – enjoyable, thrilling, but in no way breaking the good world that one lives in. (the bhadrakok?).

And last but not the least. Two gems.

The labor of love (Asha Jaoar Majhe; Director Aditya Vikarn Sengupta). A movie to be watched for the sheer poetry of images. Of devotion and love and trust in the daily acts in a metropolitan city where the couple is bound by the necessities of earning a living, of the daily grind. And it conveys the poetry that love is.

The second gem is from a movie based on an old story by Rabindranath Tagore. Where the star-crossed pairs of husband & wife and lovers, unite in the end. Among the last scene is one that captures the essence of the movie – the man and the woman he had looked after ‘in trust’ (being the wife of another man), meet. The husband quietly ushers the man in his wife’s bedchamber, and leaves them together. The scene is no more than a few minutes of the movie – and yet it captures the tenderness of human emotions. (Naukadubi; Director Rituparno Ghosh). Gulzar mentioned as the second screenplay writer along with the Director.

The sensibilities that Tagore, and his ilk, put in the middle of this bhadrakok thrive and give new and amazing ways of looking at love at women at compassion and kindness. Not confining it to the relationship between women and men – but encompassing all others – of and with older people, relatives, children, young women, young men, parents...

It is a way of looking at love – an attempt at enveloping, engulfing that space with grace.

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The only single image that I could compare it within Hindi movies – was the scene in Dev D (Director Anurag Kashyap) – where Abhay Deol (Devdas) holds the modern Chandramukhi (Kalki Koechlin) with love and compassion – as she shares of the mms of her sexual act with another student circulated in the school and the public. He conveys the love – a love that contains both of this world and another – of the reaching out to another through compassion, comfort.

Else, the less said the better – the Hindi movie way of being loved, for a woman.

Does it mean that the Bengali movies eschew the violence in the present world? No – there is suicide, rape, murder... And remember, the story lines mentioned above are, sometimes, just a side story happening along with the main story line in the movie.

Yes, definitely – being loved the Bengali way – is worth exploring. I did this through a glimpse of a few movies. You may be lucky enough to do it through its literature, movies, newspapers, daily life.

The magic is still there in the movies.

Disavowals:

Anyone who reads this is bound to be disappointed with their foray, within the realm of Bangla movies.

The writer's understanding, reading, viewing of Bengal, Bengali movies and literature is limited. Many of you have a much larger and deeper knowledge and understanding.

Yes, the writer is a woman, and feels bound to state the above two.

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PS: And if the attraction of viewing women kindly fails, there is always 'The Great Indian Kitchen' (Malayalam; Director Jeo Baby) for the true face of gender dynamics.