

## HLF Khabar

Monthly Newsletter

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#### About

*Khabar* is HLF's latest initiative to keep in touch with its supporters and to reach out to new audiences. Through this online medium, we hope to bridge physical distances and recreate the true spirit of *sahitya*. We look forward to your feedback and your contributions. (Please see [Submission Guidelines](#)).

#### Team

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# KAAMYADHAARA

## Preface

Hoshang Merchant

Morning rain Mourning  
Rain sobbing like a cold puppy  
Rain like needles stitching a shroud  
Mending the rent garment of my life  
Washing it to make it new

My poems all rained upon  
As if my lovers wept over my letters  
It should have rained poems over the world  
My poems sobbing like a cold puppy

My children laugh  
They do not know everything I do is for them  
They are the rain refreshing the world  
They are the needles piecing together my rent body  
The words you drink are not wine but blood  
The tears you see are not water but wine

Everyone comes to eat my body  
Everyone comes to drink my soul  
Everyone is hungry for a body  
Everyone is hungry for a soul

I left a poem on a page  
As a mark of my passage through this earth  
My children search me on this page burning  
I have opened my eyes to become the Sun  
(Parsi New Year, 1999)

## Freedom Song

Hoshang Merchant

*Politics without poetry is dry  
Poetry with politics is effete*

1  
A Korean pianist plays  
Chopin's "Revolutionary Étude"  
on video  
2  
The video shows  
a thawing river  
freeing itself in spring  
3  
The piano  
sets up a storm  
4  
Who will clean up the mess?  
The old have departed  
The young are left.  
5  
By writing this  
I, the poet  
Have become responsible.

## Heer Ranjha – For Navtej

Hoshang Merchant

Heer saw Ranjha toil  
Below her high balcony

Her heart went out to him  
Soon, he went out to her

No  
Someone said NO  
All music stopped

But Heer heard it in her heart  
So did Ranjha in his

The night was dark  
Lightning crackled in the inky sky  
It poured in sheets  
Snakes swam out to circle Heer's feet  
She swam out to Him riding a clay pot

Our bodies, mud  
Would melt in water  
But for a fired clay pot  
That reached shore

Love is a yes  
Love is a yes and a no

Body is mud  
But resolve is stone  
Water wears out stone

What use differentiating rain from river  
When all is water in water

Blood, sweat, semen, spit  
It's all water

When Ranjha played Holi  
The colour poured as sweat from his body  
Melting, he had become Radha

When Heer played Holi, alone  
Insensed, she wore Krishna's crown

But war has no favourites  
If love is war  
Blood pours equally from all  
Even enemy blood is pure

If my breath pours  
Like the flute's lament  
Into you  
Then who is I  
And where is You?

## स्वाद

लाल्टू

माँएँ माप कर नमक या मसाले नहीं डालतीं  
पकती दाल में बेहिचक कम ज्यादा हींग पड़ता है

स्वाद अलग भी हो तो बेस्वाद नहीं होता कुछ भी  
यह जिस्म के अंदर  
स्वच्छंदता की कुंजी है

पंछी सरहदें पार करते हैं  
कविता की तरह लामकां धरती पर फैल जाते हैं  
हम तुम तसव्वुर में घबराते हैं  
कि ज़िंदगी कुछ और हो सकती है  
नमक मसालों के बँधे हिसाब से अलग आलू-बैंगन का भरता  
कुछ और स्वाद लिए हो सकता है

खून  
रंगों से आगे  
उद्दाम, हर छंद तोड़  
बकौल ग़ालिब आँखों से टपकना चाहता है।

## स्रष्टा

लाल्टू

नज़रों में कुछ टपकता सा है, एक दूसरे को देखती वे स्थिर हैं;  
क्या उसने इश्क की मारी ये नज़रें आईने में देखी होंगी?  
तसव्वुर को सच मान ज़िंदगी की पड़ताल करती उसकी आँखें  
फट रही होंगी।  
बहते खून से शिराएँ धड़क रही होंगी।  
खुद को काली-गोरी आकृति में ढाला होगा।  
बिना किसी डर कैनवस पर खुद को उतारा होगा।  
उसके हाथ काँप रहे होंगे। रंगों से लथपथ अपने हाथों को सीने  
तक खींच लाई होगी।  
खुद से वादा किया होगा कि इनके बीच कहीं कोई तूफ़ान न  
होगा।  
उनसे गुफ़्तगू कर रही होगी, भरोसा दे रही होगी कि उनका  
सच उस तक महफूज़ रहेगा।

लापरवाह इश्क का नगाड़ा। दो जिस्म। काला-गोरा। पीछे  
जंगल।  
जंगल में जंगल का प्राण। अंधकूप।

फ़िलहाल जिस्म के ऊपरी हिस्से दिखते हैं।  
खुली नज़र, सीने तक के जिस्म, मानो बाक़ी हिस्से किसी  
क़ैदखाने में हैं।  
पत्तों के बीच छिपे-से चमकते जवाहरात हैं।  
क्या वह देवी बनना चाहती है?  
कि उसके सिरजे जिस्म जवाहरात से ढँक जाएँ।  
कि स्रष्टा ऐसा हो जो सचमुच सबको खुश देखना चाहता है।

## Taste

Laltu

(Translated from Hindi by the poet)

Mothers do not measure the salt or spices they put in  
the mix  
Heeng is thrown freely in unmeasured amounts in  
cooking daal

The taste may vary but it is never tasteless  
This is the key  
To freedom within the body

Birds go across the borders  
Like poems they spread around across the Earth under  
an open sky  
We fear imagining such  
That Life could be different  
Aloo-Baingan Bharta may taste different  
As the recipe varies in amounts of salt and spices

Blood  
Flows beyond the veins  
Breaking all barriers, furious  
Longs to drip from the eyes as Ghalib said.

## The Creator

Laltu

(Translated from Hindi by the poet)

What is this dripping from those eyes, while they stand  
still gazing at each other;  
Did she find these besotted eyes in a mirror?  
Taking the imagined as the real, her life-exploring eyes  
must be coming apart.  
The veins must be pulsating with blood flowing.  
She must have immersed herself in the black and white  
shapes.  
She must have poured herself on the canvas fearlessly.  
Her hands must be shivering.  
She would have folded her colour-soaked hands on her  
chest.  
She would have promised to herself that no storm will  
ever come between them.  
She must be talking to them, assuring them that their  
Truth will be safe with her.

Loud percussion proclaiming careless love.  
Two bodies. Black and white. A forest behind.  
Life wild in the wild. Heart of darkness.

For now, all we see is the upper parts of the bodies.  
Eyes open, bodies down to the chests,  
As if the rest of the body is confined somewhere in a  
prison.  
Between the leaves are shining jewels, may be hidden.  
Does she want to become a Goddess?  
That the bodies she creates are covered with jewels  
That the creator must be one with desire to see  
everyone happy.

## स्वर्ण-युग

लाल्टू

बच्चों से कह दूँ  
कि आस्माँ के रंग देखना अपराध है  
कि बहिष्कार मेरी जाति का नाम है  
यह वक्त जिसमें किसी भी दिन मैं कैद हो सकता हूँ  
यह भारतवर्ष का स्वर्ण-युग है  
कह दूँ कि अपनी जुबान नाम की कोई चीज़ नहीं होती है  
कि सँपोले और नेवले सभी अंग्रेज़ी सीख रहे हैं  
कि फौज़ में जाना और दुश्मन दुश्मन चिल्लाना सबसे बड़ा  
धर्म है  
कहने को बहुत कुछ है  
कहाँ हैं बच्चे इस धरती पर?

## The Golden Age

Laltu

(Translated from Hindi by the poet)

Must I tell the children  
That it is a crime to see colours in the sky  
That Exclusion is what my caste is called  
These times when I could be arrested any time of the  
day  
This is the golden age of Bharatavarsha  
Must I say that there is no such thing as your own  
tongue  
That snakes and weasels alike are learning English  
That enlisting in the army and screaming Dushman-  
Dushman is the tallest religion  
I have a lot to say  
Where have the children of this Earth gone?

## उम्मीद नहीं छोड़ती कविताएँ

केदारनाथ सिंह

ज़रा हवा चलती है  
कहीं एक पत्ता  
पट से  
गिरता है ज़मीन पर  
और एक छपती हुई कविता  
अपने टाइप और फ्रेम से छिटककर  
हो जाती है अलग  
एक अच्छी कविता  
तरस खाने लगती है  
अपने अच्छे होने पर

एक महान कविता  
ऊबने लगती है  
अपने स्फटिक गरिमा के अंदर

और जब सारा शहर सो जाता है  
तो इन सारी कविताओं में  
भरा अवसाद  
दुनिया पर बरसता है  
सारी-सारी रात

पर मौसम  
चाहे जितना खराब हो  
उम्मीद नहीं छोड़ती कविताएँ  
वे किसी अदृश्य खिड़की से  
चुपचाप देखते रहती हैं  
हर आते-जाते को  
और बुदबुदाती हैं  
धन्यवाद! धन्यवाद!

## Poems Don't Leave Hope

Kedarnath Singh

(Translated from Hindi by Himanshi Pandey and  
H S Komalesha)

The wind blows  
slowly  
and a leaf falls  
swish...  
to the ground.  
A printing poem  
splits from  
its typewriter and framer,  
a good poem  
sympathizes with itself  
on being good

A great poem  
gets bored  
within its crystalline dignity

And when the entire city sleeps  
then  
the sadness  
filled in these poems  
rains on the world,  
the entire night

No matter  
how bad the weather is  
poems don't leave hope  
they watch every passer-by,  
silently  
from an invisible window  
and murmur  
thank you  
thank you

No matter / how bad the weather is / poems don't leave hope / they watch every passer-by, / silently / from an invisible window / and murmur / thank you, thank you

Poems Don't Leave Hope, Kedarnath Singh

## गमछा और तौलिया

केदारनाथ सिंह

गमछा और तौलिया  
दोनों एक तार पर टंगे  
सूख रहे थे साथ-साथ  
वे टंगे थे  
जैसे दो संस्कृतियाँ  
जैसे दो हाथ – बाँया और दायाँ  
झूलते हुए अलग-बगल

तेज़ धूप में  
थोड़ी-सी गरमा-गरमी के बाद  
मैंने सुना –  
तौलिया गमछे से कह रहा था  
तू हिंदी में सूख रहा है  
सूख  
मैं अंग्रेज़ी में कुछ देर  
झपकी ले लेता हूँ।

### Instruction

Abhinaya Murthy

There are days marked  
in the Tamil calendar as ‘auspicious.’  
My mother would make time  
in her schedule simply to make food  
to mark the occasion.  
But when it came to serving,  
my grandmother had strict instructions.  
“First the payasam,” she would say  
“Never serve rice on an empty plate,”  
she would command—gently,  
like a queen with mardani stained hands  
and jasmine in her hair but a sword tied to her  
waist.  
I never understood the need for these peculiar  
particulars.  
Now, years later, I think of these unwritten  
manuals  
inscribed in memory. Food to my grandmother  
was never routine. Food was ritual, religion,  
an ode to ancestors.  
But I think, it was mostly an open letter  
that said, “this is how you will remember me,  
in small teachings, and in little practices.”

### Ikebana: A Study

Melanie Alexander

Sometimes, I watch myself in the cut stems of the  
flowers;  
Other times, as the penknife, snipping –  
Often, as the water kissing the stalk lips;  
Rarely, as the womb-vase.

## Gamucha and Towel

Kedarnath Singh

(Translated from Hindi by Himanshi Pandey and  
H S Komalesha)

*Gamucha* and Towel  
are hanging side by side  
on a wire  
drying together  
dangling together  
like two cultures  
like two hands  
left and right  
swinging side by side

Under the scorching sun  
after a heated argument  
I heard  
Towel speaking to *Gamucha*  
you are drying in Hindi  
dry up  
and meanwhile  
let me take a nap  
in English.

(*Gamucha*: a traditional thin, coarse cotton towel;  
used to dry the body after bathing or to wipe sweat).

### Fracture

Anna Lynn

What when the break of wood  
is a splinter in your dreams?  
screaming.  
She walks with a broken spine  
suckling fledglings, supine limbs  
a cushion around her pain  
Red, the colour of love,  
of pain, of anger, of blood,  
splinters hang in space,  
screws suspended,  
remains shoved  
under a table of broken meals  
like forgotten pain,  
the days move along,  
but  
Red colours her laughter.

### White Noise

Niharika OT

Immersed in the class  
Never looking away from the screen.  
A loud pitter-patter  
Drowning out the voice speaking in my ear.  
I look up to be met  
By a downpour of droplets.

It's raining!

I stare out through the bars  
Mesmerised.  
Suddenly it's quiet  
No more pitter-patter.  
Just the voice in my ear  
Still droning on.

## The Wheelbarrow

Nithya Mariam John

*Life goes on like before-  
people standing, sitting,  
and walking*

- Patricia Cavalli

The three rolled up our street —  
the lady curved into the hollowness  
of a blue wheelbarrow,  
a gaping toddler on her lap  
measuring a slice of the wide blue sky, and

the man who heaved the length  
of the ascent, sweating.

The weight of a family rained  
all across the back of his blue shirt.

## Dandi Beach 1930

Richard Rose

Twenty days along the road from Sabarmati,  
seventy-eight struggled to keep your pace.  
Through Nadiad and Kankapura,  
Derol, Mangarol and Surat,  
tens of thousands cheered and lined the route.  
Seventy-eight soon became five hundred,  
five hundred then was multiplied tenfold.  
Until upon the wave-kissed beach at Dandi  
fifty thousand souls had gathered at the shore.

Light glinting from fast in-rushing waters  
could never hope to match the spark of fire,  
that kindled and ignited in your eyes,  
and brought tears to a nation that held breath.  
As stooping low to fill your palm with brine,  
you raised it high above your head to symbolise,  
and show the world how on the beach today you  
wrote,  
the opening of the final chapter of your magnum  
opus.  
By seemingly a simple act committed in defiance,  
long passages of pomp and grandeur were disrupted.  
And thus, it was that on that day beside the sea at  
Dandi,  
a creaking empire moved towards its death throes,  
the one time mighty felled, by a mere handful of salt.

## Final Meeting

Richard Rose

I cannot call to memory the last time we held hands.  
In infancy it would have been, because you taught me  
early  
that actions such as these were not seemly among  
men.

Displays of overt affection never really were your style,  
though occasions I recall when your mask slipped  
enough  
to reveal beneath your carapace a far more gentle soul.

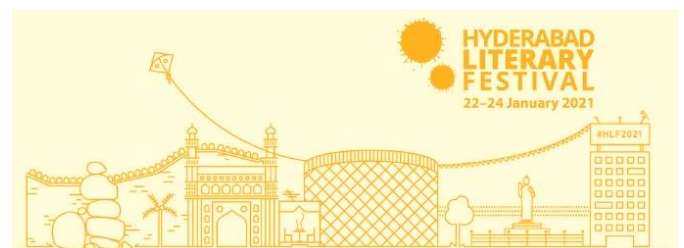
A kindly nurse prepared me before she let me in to sit  
upon the chair, squeezed in beside your bed, in which I  
knew  
that this would be the last where you would lay and find  
some rest.

Your hearing, she informed me, would be the last  
sense to depart,  
and I was glad there might be time, and as I bent to  
whisper,  
hoped that you might hear words that should not be left  
unsaid.

Looking down I saw your frail hand, limp lying on white  
sheets,  
and taking hold I knew this time the choice was mine  
alone,  
and sensed you'd not refuse me now, even had you  
been able.

No place remained for manly postures in those final  
hours,  
when this most simple contact brought late comfort to  
us both,  
when we held hands just as we might have sixty years  
ago.

I feel you gently squeeze my hand and take this as  
affirmation,  
a reminder of what we both have lost when all  
goodbyes are said,  
and once again I wonder when we might have last held  
hands.





# YOUNG VOICES

## Criticize me as much as you want

Aryaman Roy (13 years)

Criticise me as much as you want,  
with words that always haunt.  
I shall take them as a compliment,  
for I have a spine that cannot be bent.  
Criticise me just as you desire,  
And I'll fight fire with fire.  
Hit me hard till my wounds are sore,  
and I'll fight to the core!  
Even if I severely bleed,  
I won't give up indeed.  
If you lust for my defeat,  
'I can't be beaten', let me repeat!  
Criticise me as much as you want,  
but I shall be thankful.  
For your criticism has done nothing,  
except make me a better human being!

## Tell me what you do

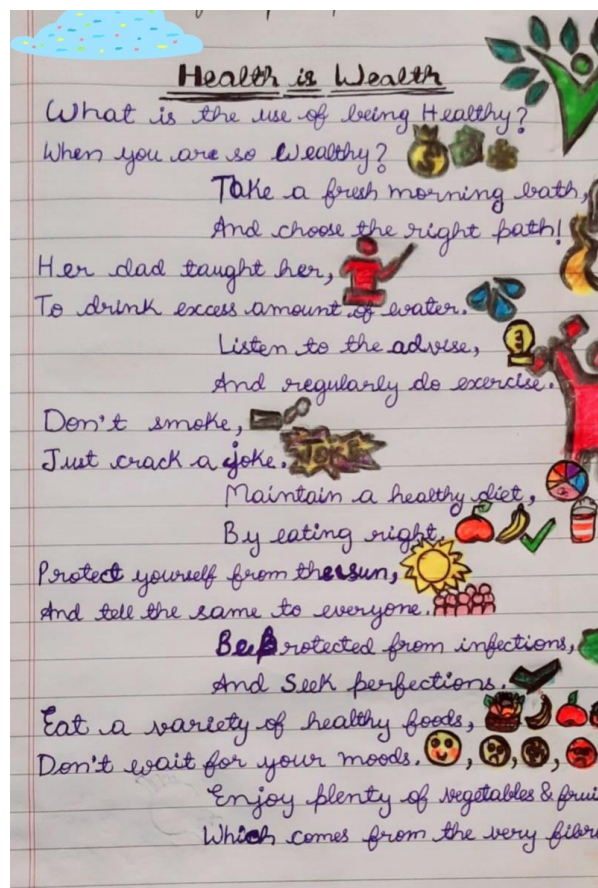
Sae Sanmitra Chitte (10 years)

Whoopdee doo  
What do you do?  
I am your friend tell me what  
Do you dance all day?  
Doo do doo  
Do you sing all day?  
Doo do doo  
Tell me what,  
Tell me what  
Do you do?  
Do you play all day?  
Doo do doo  
Do you sleep all day?  
Doo do doo.

Whoopdee doo  
What do you do?  
I am your friend tell me what  
Yeah, I want to know  
What do you do  
Every single day  
Just tell me,  
Just tell me what do you do?  
Do you study all day?  
Doo do doo  
Just tell me what you do?  
I just want to know,  
What my best friend does all day  
Just tell me what you do.

## Health is Wealth

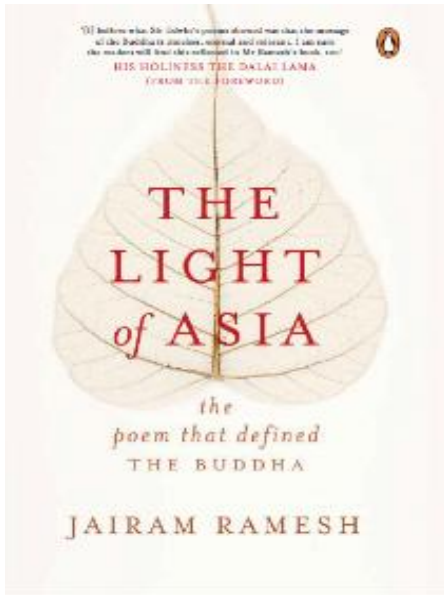
K Rupa (13 years)



Clay modelling workshop at Hyderabad Public School, HLF 2016



# MEET MY BOOK

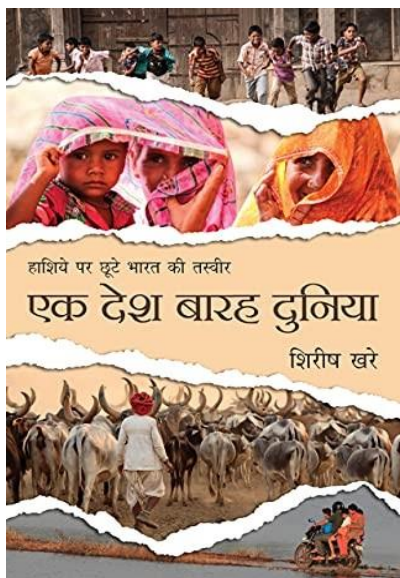
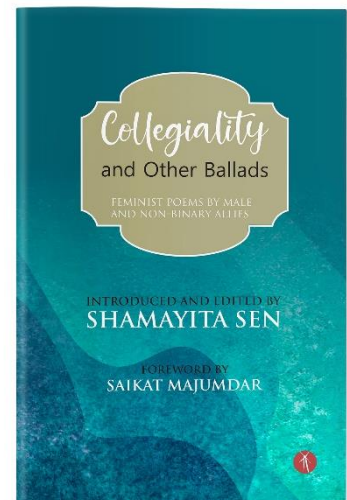


This book is a biography of an epic poem and of its author. The poem *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold is a narrative of the life and message of the Buddha. When first published in London in July 1879, it immediately took England by storm, and soon thereafter America and Europe too were stirred by it. The poem had a huge literary, cultural, and social impact. It influenced people like Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar, C.V. Raman and numerous others across the globe. It was translated into numerous European and Asian languages. I wrote this book captivated as I have always been by the Buddha. I also wanted to bring to light the career of its remarkable author who also translated the *Hitopadesha*, the *Gita Govinda* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

— **Jairam Ramesh**

My book *Collegiality and Other Ballads* is an anthology of poems on feminism and related ideas by contemporary poets who are either male, queer or do not fall under the binary definitions of gender. The recent fall of Kabul (2021) makes one wonder if social uplift of women is ever possible without ally-ship in a hetero-patriarchal society. I believe that equilibrium cannot be attempted without the involvement of those who have historically occupied privileged positions of power: men, white or upper caste. The anthology is an experiment; poets talk about love, women, toxic relationships and freedom from patriarchal structures. Dalit and indigenous writing is also included.

— **Shamayita Sen**



*Ek Desh Barah Duniya* (Hindi) is a book about the marginalized India. It consists of twelve reportages from seven states of the country during the period 2008 to 2017. The reports capture the voices of the neglected people and highlight the real faces that get hidden and obscured by the huge pile of statistical data. The book is about travelling, but it is also about journeys that we wish never end. It is a book about people whom we see and do not recognize, whom we know about, but do not want to meet!

— **Shirish Khare**



# PROFILES



## Turn the Page Book Club

In March 2015, five people got together to create a book club, christened it 'Turn the Page', and appropriately launched it with readings from Shakespeare. Six years later it grew to a 30-member family of readers who enjoy the art of jousting without drawing blood! The beauty of 'Turn the Page' (TtP for short) is its variety, both in the range of books discussed, and the diversity of its membership: a melting pot of left and right wing, capitalists, libertarians, atheists, humanists, pet-parents, golfers, bikers, artists, journalists, academics, private equity investors, deep technologists, social activists, and startup entrepreneurs too! Book selections covered themes like religion, history, sci-fi, comedy, travelogues, true crime, biographies, etc. Covid pushed us to move to virtual meetings. While we lost the in-person interactions, Zoom allowed our pan-India members to participate. It also helped us to invite authors from India and overseas to participate in the discussions.

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## Literary Society



LitSoC, The Literary Society of IIT Hyderabad, is the official club for students to showcase their writing, oratory, and creative skills. LitSoc consists of the Book and Movie Club, Debate Club, Quiz Club, and the Writing Club. It aims to unite like-minded students from various disciplines to engage in intellectual pursuits, and above all have some serious fun. The club organizes debates, quizzes, lit fests, and has also launched its own magazine, *Lexicon*. The club members were active online throughout the pandemic and arranged events like "The Binge Bible" in which students discussed the most happening OTT shows. The club has participated in, among others, Inter-IIT Cultural Meet, Nihilanth: The Inter-IIT-IIM Quizfest, Verba Maximus and Interrobang. LitSoc is gearing up to conduct more activities, fests, and publish the second edition of *Lexicon*.

- Mansi and Shreyas, Heads, LitSoc
- Rajneesh Gupta, Information Coordinator  
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# HUMARA HYDERABAD



## Café Niloufer

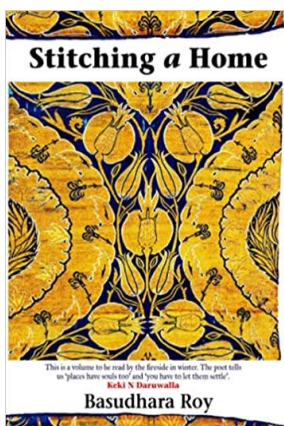
Lakdikapul, Banjara Hills

Hyderabad's Café Niloufer is one of the most popular places to catch up with the city's *bataan* and *khabraan* over a cup of steaming Irani chai and Bun Maska. Each day, the café serves to at least 20,000 people from all walks of life! The success of the café is credited to the hard work of Shri Babu Rao who joined as a staff and became its owner in 1981. Since then, the café has blended traditional brewing techniques and international baking standards to create a local and global tea-experience. Mr Asish Jacob Thomas, PRO, University of Hyderabad and a chai lover, has been visiting the café for the last 10 years. He loves the joyful buzz of the place; to him the café is an emotion, a celebration of love, warmth and relaxed conversations.

— Jhilam Chattaraj

# BOOK REVIEWS

*Stitching a Home* by Basudhara Roy. Red River, 2021. Pages 94, Rs 207.



## To Home a House

Basudhara Roy takes us to spaces in the family domain that we inhabit and imagine, the doors that we shut or leave ajar, and mysteries of nights we long for but never realize through the senses. Sometimes the house key is lost, sometimes the lock.

Life makes and unmakes itself. Basudhara describes what is and what was, and how the comprehension of the interface between the self and the objects has inspired a course of reflection that takes her poetic self along a stream of thoughts about repressed feelings, regret, present awareness and introspection, concluding with hope for a better tomorrow. She stitches hopes.

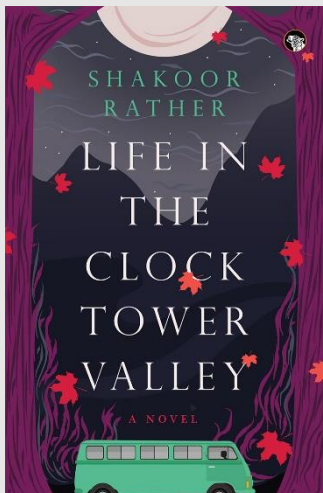
Everything that takes place in the dark theatre foreshadows the unpredictability of the human mind. These intimate poems manifest the truth through unique images from life's dilemma; arrival and departures of waiting. Vivid waiting is an important aspect of the environment that Basudhara notes within her poetic canvas, overlooking cities from a railway coach.

The sensitive poet paints her poetic house pragmatically. House stitching is an act of negotiation, a struggle within a domain stratified by role relations. Possibly, the poetic self in the collection is catching up the motion of progression that is never complete. Time plays a role in realizing the ephemeral aspect of humanity. For the inward-looking poetess, time is a necessary part of the human experience, and in the progression of time in human existence we find beauty and truth and meaning and ultimately, joy. This is a rare book which will please every reader!

— Jaydeep Sarangi

Professor of English and Principal  
New Alipore College, Kolkata.

*Life in the Clock Tower Valley: A Novel* by Shakoor Rather. Speaking Tiger, 2021. Pages 176, Rs 350.



### Of Curfews, Lost Loves and *Kandurwaans*

One often approaches fiction by journalists with scepticism and caution—for it straddles the opposing worlds of fact and fiction, with their predictable differences in approach and technique. That Shakoor Rather's debut novel has successfully avoided the familiar pitfalls is amply clear from the generous reviews it received since its publication early this year.

The clock tower in the Lal Chowk of Srinagar is the symbolic heart of Kashmir's life, politics, history, culture, and revolutionary upheavals. The politics, the changes wrought by regimes, the resultant miasma, the loss of ecological balance are certainly a much-discussed part of the novel. But they do not appeal as much as, say, the glimpses of universality it offers, like fine strands of saffron floating in and blending softly in rich milk! This aspect of the work is what will make it a worthy addition to literature from/of Kashmir. Shakoor Rather holds out a world, that has not wholly lost its charm and glory.

Divided into sixteen chapters, it revolves around a handful of characters, whose lives are interwoven in a post-millennial Srinagar. It is the nostalgia, which the author is legitimized to feel, that generates a *fernweh*, a far-sickness for a place one has never visited or will never visit.

Shakoor Rather utilizes his journalistic reticence optimally to prevent a parade of clichés in his debut fictional attempt, and leaves cherished spaces and silences for his readers to fill up on their own with emotions. Overall, a delicate tale of regrets and achievements blown away like a wisp of smoke or ripe autumn leaves, even before one is able to grasp it completely, leaving behind its memories and the fragrance of roses, tulips, *kahwah* and freshly baked bread from the *kandurwaans* for long thereafter!

— **Oindrila Ghosh**

Associate Professor of English  
Diamond Harbour Women's University, West Bengal.

## FILM REVIEWS

*Other Kohinoors: The Rocks of Hyderabad*. Produced by Uma Magal and Mahnoor Yar Khan. Directed by Uma Magal.

### Preview

Rocks have been the signature feature of the Deccan landscape for billions of years. In the last few decades, however, the relationship with the rocks has acquired a new dimension: a conflict between the pressures of urbanisation and the imperative to preserve the geoheritage.

Uma Magal's documentary, or "Rockumentary", *Other Kohinoors* on the rocks of Hyderabad is simply a labour of love. With a fascinating narrative embellished with breathtaking visuals, the documentary presents both sides of the debate. A large part of the film showcases some of the most picturesque settings of the rocks of Hyderabad. Since generations have lived by these rocks, it is not surprising that the Deccan rocks have made their way into the folklore, poetry, songs, and art of the region. The documentary portrays this interface sensitively.

The last part of the documentary shows the inevitable "modernisation" of the city of Hyderabad crushing the rocks literally under its imprint. The filmmaker leaves the conclusion open-ended, but it is hardly in doubt that she would not want urbanisation at the cost of these natural 'diamonds' that dot the Deccan landscape. Please visit [otherkohinoors.com/screenings](http://otherkohinoors.com/screenings) for more details.

— **Aishwarya Chakkilam**

*Screenplay of an Indian Love Story*. Produced by Dr K Aruna Kumari. Written and Directed by KL Prasad. 2020, 128 minutes.

The film starts with a song, formed as a dialogue between the two principal characters in love. The man is self-effacing, claiming he is not suitable. It is the woman who takes the relationship forward, providing intellectual and moral justification. Next, shown in silhouette, the woman demands a divorce. The man, who is a film director, seeks isolation at a remote location for one day, to help reach a resolution.

The film explores the foundation of the relationship between the couple and their disillusionment. The director is to be commended for his narrative style, his thematic handling of the erosion of the moral fabric of society, and the stinging commentary on its ills, especially those related to women.

The lead pair in this directorial debut of KL Prasad is Pragathi Yadhati, trained at the Lee Strasberg institute, and Vikram Shiva, who graduated from the National School of Drama. The two-hour film in Telugu has English subtitles.

— Arvind Acharya

## HLF ONLINE SESSIONS

For updates on HLF online sessions, subscribe to HLF YouTube channel <[youtube.com/c/hlf-india](https://youtube.com/c/hlf-india)>



09 July 2021

***Green Humour for Greying Planet.* Cartoonist and columnist Rohan Chakravarty in conversation with Sita Reddy, cultural sociologist of science.**

Rohan's fourth book of cartoons was published in July 2021 and is already in reprint! It is a curated compilation of 250 cartoons drawn over a decade-long career. While tracing his evolutionary journey in career as well as in style, he says that there is a huge disconnect between environment policy and citizens. Visuals and social media help create the consciousness on environment. "Cartoons are like a slap on your face followed immediately with a hug." He adds, "I rely on my subjects having a very human personality." He strives to use jargon responsibly without anthropomorphism and without stereotypes.

Catch this delightful conversation on environment toons at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypAXhNYC1V8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypAXhNYC1V8)

23 July 2021

***The Great Hindu Civilisation: Achievement, Neglect, Bias and the Way Forward.***  
**Pavan K Varma in conversation with screenwriter and novelist Advaita Kala.**

In this prelaunch session of his book, on being asked why he chose a combative approach, Pavan Varma replied, “I wanted to take on board some of the misguided and misinformed critique on what to my mind is one of the greatest civilisations of the world. I say this with no xenophobia or chauvinism, but I think that Hindu civilisation must rank amongst the great civilisations of the world for its continuity, for its antiquity, for its peaks of refinement, for its ability to assimilate, for its tolerance of diversity, and for the sheer celebration and ideation that went into the making of this civilisation that refused to let it become a museum relic or an antiquity. It is a living civilisation”. He also stated that secularism is a compulsion for this country but not by downplaying Hinduism. Pavan Varma’s painstaking research comes through in this very interesting conversation. It has also been viewed several times after it was first aired.

Watch it at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZW1-Q1qwlM&t=8s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZW1-Q1qwlM&t=8s)



## NEW PUBLICATIONS

***Shanti Parav: Treatise on Peace*** by Des Raj Kali. Translated from the original Punjabi by Neeti Singh. Orient Blackswan. Pages 152, Rs 395.

A post-Independence novel set in the heartland of Punjab, *Shanti Parav* brilliantly parodies the ‘peace’ claims of its source text—the twelfth book of the *Mahabharata*—and provides a radical Dalit response from the margins of history to its justifications of the ruling elite, through gentle interrogation, subversive literary technique, and fragments of alternative history.

***The Window Sill*** Short Stories by Nishi Pulugurtha. Hawakal Publishers. Pages 116, Rs 250.

The twenty stories in this debut collection speak of the everyday, of pain and hurt, of disability, of domestic violence, of trauma, catastrophes and calamities, and of the triumph of the human spirit that struggles at every step.



**PolyTicks, DeMockKrazy & Mumbo Jumbo** by Avay Shukla. Pippa Rann Books. Pages 256, Rs 150.

A work of satire, this book takes a long, hard, and bemused look at the mysterious ways of governments, the vagaries of the justice system, the fashionable peccadilloes of society, and the arcane gibberish of social media. Every subject is approached in an analytical manner and with a liberal dose of humour.

**I Want a Poem and Other Poems** by Jerry Pinto. Speaking Tiger. Pages 80, Rs 299.

A collection of delightful, quirky, real, and relatable poems that burrow into the deep and familiar terrains of human nature.

**After Death Comes Water: Selected Prose Poems** by Joy Goswami. Translated from the Bengali by Sampurna Chatterjee. Harper Collins. Pages 252, Rs 399.

The book showcases the extraordinary range of the writer's genius and inventiveness.

## READER'S RESPONSE

(Grateful to our readers for sending feedback on our first issue – Team *HLF Khabar*)

I spent the last 30 minutes browsing through your newsletter and have already shared it with people I know who will enjoy its content. Congratulations on this brilliant idea—using technology to spread information on various topics: poetry, books, podcasts, YouTube videos. WOW! Congratulations!

— Dr Evita Fernandez

Just now read the newsletter. Excellent. Congratulations to you and your team. Long ago, I came to know from [Ashar] Farhan that the acronym HLF becomes “हलफ़” in Urdu (H=ह, L=ल, F=फ़) which has its own meaning (oath).

— Adesh Yadav

Great newsletter and enjoyed going through the contents. It would be great if this could be posted on a blog with email subscriptions enabled.

— Sudhindra

Suresh K Nair's mural painting at Vidyaranya High School for HLF 2020



# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Friends

Thank you for your overwhelming response to our call for submissions! We could not reply to you individually. But rest assured that every submission will get due attention, and will be considered for publication in future issues.

We invite

- Original, un/published poems (two or three poems; 40-50 lines in all; in English or Indian languages, along with their English translation).
- Reviews of recent books (along with the image of the front cover), films, web series, podcasts etc (in not more than 300 words).
- Write ups on book and literary clubs and societies and their activities (in not more than 100 words).
- Authors' introduction of their recent books (in not more than 100 words), along with the image of the front cover.
- Information about recent publications (in not more than 50 words).
- Announcements of forthcoming events (in not more than 50 words), and so on.

Submission Guidelines (Only for new submissions. Those who have already sent, NEED NOT resend).

- All submissions should be sent only as MS-Word documents. If you are concerned about the formatting going awry in transmission, you may also send a PDF as an additional document for reference.
- In the Subject field of the email, describe your submission as: Poem, Review, New Publication, etc.
- Follow the word limit. Submissions that are far beyond the word limit will not be considered.
- Give a one-line description of yourself—your designation, or occupation, etc. There is no deadline for sending submissions. All submissions should be sent to <[hlfkhabar@gmail.com](mailto:hlfkhabar@gmail.com)>.

**Keshav Desiraju**, author, former bureaucrat, and a crusader against corruption in the medical profession, passed away in Chennai on 5 September. His book, *Of Gifted Voice*, considered the definitive biography of MS Subbulakshmi, was featured in the July issue of *HLF Khabar*.

Visit our website: [www.hydlitfest.org](http://www.hydlitfest.org)

