

HLF KHABAR

Quarterly Newsletter

VOL III, NO 2, SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2023

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Submission Guidelines

About

Khabar is HLF's latest initiative to keep in touch with its supporters and 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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সৌৰণীৰ দীঘল ছাঁ /১ কমল কুমাৰ তাঁতী

বাৰিষাৰ প্ৰথম বৰষুণে ধুই নিয়া আকাশ আৰু ধৰিত্ৰী। মই
সেউজীয়া।
মোৰ পৃথিৱীখনো সেউজীয়া। মোৰ মানুহবোৰ সেউজীয়া।

মোক পোৱানে চিনি? মই কোন? আমি কোন?
মই কলম দিয়া চাহ গছৰ শিপাৰ পৰা গজি উঠিছোঁ।
সেউজীয়া বাগিচাৰ শিপা আৰু মাটিত মেৰ খাই আছে
আমাৰ জীৱনবোৰ আমাৰ আত্মবোৰ

নাজানো ক'ত দূৰৈৰ অৰণ্যত এৰি থৈ আহিছিলোঁ মোৰ শিপা।
নাজানো এৰি থৈ আহিছিলোঁ কিদৰে সেই শুকান মাটি সেই
টকলা পাহাৰ
সেই গছ সেই নৈ আৰু নিজৰা।
নাজানো এৰি থৈ আহিছিলোঁ কিদৰে মোৰ প্ৰিয়তমাক
সেই অৰণ্য আৰু অৰণ্যৰ গানবোৰক।

সেই কৰমৰ ৰাতি এৰি থৈ আহিছিলোঁ সকলোবোৰ
মাদলৰ চেওত বাজি উঠিছিল বিষাদ আৰু নিঃস্বতাৰ ৰাতি
সেই কৰমৰ পুৱতি নিশা শেষবাৰৰ বাবে দেখিছিলোঁ আমাৰ
নদী আৰু ভেঁটি

সকলো নিয়তিৰ আপোন হাতৰ খেলা
ঘৰৰ ভেঁটি সৱতি কৈ উঠিছিল মোৰ নানাই।

সকলো সৌৰণী কেৱল সৌৰণী
সৌৰণীৰ দীঘল ছাঁ।

সৌৰণীৰ দীঘল ছাঁ /২ কমল কুমাৰ তাঁতী

ক'ত এৰি থৈ আহিছিলোঁ মোৰ শিপা
মোৰ ভেঁটি মোৰ ঘৰ মোৰ গাঁও মোৰ অৰণ্য

মেদিনীপুৰ নে বাঁকুড়া নে কালাহাণ্ডি
ক'ত ক'ত

কেনে আছিল আমাৰ বতহ আমাৰ ৰ'দ আমাৰ বৰষুণ
কেনে আছিল আমাৰ গছ আমাৰ চৰাই আমাৰ পাহাৰ

বৰণ কেনে আছিল আমাৰ মাটিৰ
বৰণ কেনে আছিল আমাৰ গছ-লতিকাৰ
বৰণ কেনে আছিল আমাৰ দেহৰ

বৰণ কেনে আছিল আমাৰ ডাৱৰ আৰু আকাশৰ
বৰণ কেনে আছিল আমাৰ মাছ আৰু পখিলাবোৰৰ
সকলো সৌৰণীৰ একো একোজোপা গছ মোক দিয়া
সকলো সৌৰণীৰ একো একোজনী মৰমিয়াল চৰাই মোক
দিয়া
সকলো সৌৰণীৰ সকলো সেউজীয়া পাত মোক ঘূৰাই দিয়া
মোক সকলো ঘূৰাই দিয়া সৌৰণী
সৌৰণীৰ দীঘল ছাঁ।

সৌৰণীৰ দীঘল ছাঁ /৩ কমল কুমাৰ তাঁতী

সৌৰণীৰ সেউজীয়া বাগিচা আৰু কেঁচাপাতৰ গোলক
কিদৰে পাহৰোঁ সেই দিনবোৰ
সৌৰণীৰ একো-বেকা নৈ আৰু শিলবোৰ
কিদৰে পাহৰোঁ সেই ৰাতিবোৰ
সৌৰণীৰ একোজোপা গছ আৰু মৰমিয়াল চৰাইবোৰ
কিদৰে পাহৰোঁ সেই ৰ'দালি দিনবোৰ
সৌৰণীৰ তেজলগা দেহ আৰু ফেঁচাৰ কুৰুলিবোৰ
কিদৰে পাহৰোঁ সেই অন্ধকাৰ ৰাতিবোৰ
মোক ঘূৰাই দিয়া সৌৰণীৰ সকলো পৃষ্ঠা
সৌৰণীৰ দীঘল ছাঁ।

The Long Shadow of Memory 1 Kamal Kumar Tanti (Translated from Asamiya by Dibyajyoti Sarma)

The sky and the earth drenched in the first rain. I'm
green.
My earth too is green. My people are green too.

Do you know me? Who am I? Who are we? I've
sprouted
from the roots of a tea plant. Our lives, our souls
are wrapped in the roots and soil of the green
garden.

Don't know in which unknown forest the roots first
came into being. Don't know how we left that dry
soil,
that treeless hill, those trees and rivers and springs.
Don't know how I left my dear beloved,
that forest and the songs of the forest.

We left everything on that night of karam, when
the night of destitution grew sadder in the beat
of the maadal. At the dawn of that karam,
we saw for the last time our house, our hearth.

Everything's a game of luck,
leaving his house my grandfather said.

Everything's memory, only memory,
the long shadow of memory.

The Long Shadow of Memory 2 Kamal Kumar Tanti (Translated from Asamiya by Dibyajyoti Sarma)

Where did I leave my roots,
my house, my hearth, my village, my forest?

Medinipur or Barakuda, or Kalahandi?
Where? Where?

How is our breeze, our sunshine, our rain?
How are our trees, our birds, our hills?

What was the colour of our soil?
What was the colour of our trees, leaves?
What was the colour of our skin?
What was the colour of our sky and clouds?
What was the colour of our butterfly and fish?

Return me each tree of my memory.
Return me each bird of my memory.
Return me each green leaf of my memory.

Return me all my memories,
the long shadow of memory.

The Long Shadow of Memory 3 Kamal Kumar Tanti (Translated from Asamiya by Dibyajyoti Sarma)

The green garden of memory
and the scent of fresh tea leaves —
how do I forget those days?

The serpentine river of memory
and the pebbles —

Kamal Kumar Tanti's first collection of poems in Asamiya, *Marangburu Amar Pita* (Our Ancestor Marangburu, 2007) won him the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar in 2012 and the Munin Barkotoki Literary Award (2008). *Uttar Oupanibeshik Kobita* (Post-Colonial Poems, 2018) is his second collection of poems and *Nimnaborgo Somaaj Oitijya* (Subaltern Society's Legacy, 2007) is a collection of essays on post-colonial theory and subaltern historiography, with specific reference to the colonial history and culture of Assam. He has a PhD in astronomy and astrophysics from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai and Gauhati University, Guwahati. He is an Assistant Professor of Physics at Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology, Assam Centre.

The Ponytail Demi-god
For Adil
Tenzin Tsundue

A house on a house
on a house on a house,
a building rises
like a bamboo shoot.

After 72 heartbeats
in the slow Otis
when I reached your door
R-2, Palm Springs
you were gone to France
with your owl lady.

You chose me to house-sit.
But for the Tibetan in Mumbai
it's a refuge, a haven
on the 18th floor.

My open proposal said:
"Let me grow in your garden
with your roses
and prickly pears.
I will sleep under your bed
and watch tv in the mirror".

That was the time
when Bombay trained me
to survive on one vada-pao
and a cutting-chai a day.
I was so hungry, and thin,
I thought I would disappear.

Then you wrote
that I be a kite,
better still, cut loose.
You said I would swing and
swirl and
land in the hands
of a gleeful child.

I always thought you were
a Ganapati,
a ponytail demi-god.

Bombay drowns you

how do I forget those nights?

Each tree of memory
and the lovely birds —
how do I forget those sunny days?

The blood-stained body of memory
and owl's hoots —
how do I forget those dark nights?

Return me each page of
my memory,
the long shadow of memory.

Dibyajyoti Sarma has published three volumes of poetry, four books of translations, and two academic books, besides numerous short stories and articles in journals. He is a journalist and runs the micro-independent publishing venture Red River.

How I Lost My Losar
Tenzin Tsundue

Somewhere along the path, I
lost it, don't know where or when.

It wasn't a one-fine-day incident.
As I grew up it just got left behind,
very slowly, and I didn't go back for it.
It was there when as a kid I used to wait
for the annual momo dinner,
when we lined up for gifts that came
wrapped in newspapers in our
refugee school, it was there when
we all gained a year together, before
birthdays were cakes and candles.

Somewhere along the path, I
lost it, don't know where or when.

When new clothes started to feel
stiff and firecrackers frightening, when
our jailed heroes ate in pigsties there,
or were dead, heads smashed
against the wall as we danced
to Bollywood numbers here,
when the boarding school and uniforms
took care of our daily needs, when
family meant just good friends,
sometime when Losar started to mean
just a new year, few sacred routines,
somehow, I lost my Losar.

Somewhere along the path, I
lost it, don't know where or when.

Colleged in seaside city, when it was
still Bombay, sister's family on pilgrimage,
uncle in Varanasi, mother grazing cows
in South India, still need to report
to Dharamsala police, couldn't get train
tickets,
too risky to try waiting list, and it's
three days, including return journey
it's one week. Even if I go,
other siblings may not find the time.
Adjusting
timings, it's been 20 years without a Losar.

at Chowpathy,
again and again
every September.

But you always resurface,
re-habilitated as a teacher,
mentor, editor and now
the Poet Laureate.

* This poem is published first in *HLF Khabar*.

Tenzin Tsundue is a Tibetan writer and activist, born and raised in India. He has five books to his credit which have been translated into over fifteen languages. His poetry book, *Kora*, is in its fifteenth edition. He is one of the most prominent voices and activists for the Independence of Tibet.

When I Write Love Poems for You **Abhishek Tripathy**

The city sky was breathing light
Even as midnight had crept to pass.
Hand in hand we walked
As the moon smiled from behind a veiled dark.

The sea was in a frenzy
For the many waves that swept its face.
The sidewalk looked rain drenched
Just as the rains had thundered past.

The breeze from the west
Parted your hair, and carried that sweet smell
through the air.
The sweet breeze from the sea
And ah, that sweet smell of your hair!

Beneath the lamp post as we waited for cabs
The golden light lit up your face.
Golden and blessed you looked
Blessed, indeed was the evening hue.

You speak of dreams and fantasies
dreams of skies beyond the farthest limits.
That sweet breeze still blows
And your hair flies, awash with a divine glow.

We sit in that coffee shop by the sea
with white chocolate and mocha, and some
savories
that have been ordered forever now.
And we talk of things that we always do.

It is as if those days are never gone
your smile, your eyes, your voice, and just you.
Just everything about you;
Nothing has changed in the eternity that we
have traversed through.

When I sit back thinking
To write love poems for you.
That evening speaks to me
As if it were you.

But we don't hold hands now, away, that you
are gone.
When I sit writing poems for you.
You are no longer there
yet it hardly feels that you are gone.

Somewhere along the path, I
lost it, don't know where or when.

Losar is when we the juveniles and bastards
call home, across the Himalayas and cry
into the wire. Losar is some plastic flowers
and a momo party. And then in 2008
when our people rode horses, shouting
'Freedom'
against rattling machine guns, when they
died like flies in the Olympics' spectacle,
we shaved our heads bald and threatened
to die by fasting, but failed.

Somewhere along the path, I
lost it, don't know where or when.
Somewhere, I lost my Losar.

*Losar is the Tibetan New Year in the lunar
calendar which generally falls in February or
March.

This poem was published in *TSENGOL: stories
and poems of resistance*, 2012.

Is it a curse **Isai**

Is it a curse
to not want to be a friend but
just your daughter for once?

These shoulders are not
strong enough to carry your
world of hurt, disappointments,
lies and cries.

I want to hold you
but I can't drink your sorrows.
Am I not allowed a slip-up?

Smother me with smiles and sighs,
I can't be the replacement
for your absentee partner,
filling all those routes of love to your wanting
heart.

I wrestle.
Life in me runs out
trying to keep up.

You want an ocean
but my rivers run dry.
Leaving me barren
wanting to implode.

Isai is a master's student of literary and
cultural studies at EFL University, Hyderabad.

Essentially **Moramee Das**

It feels as if I don't belong here.
Human relations mean
nothing to me, though
they played a part
in what I am today.

It feels as if I don't belong here.

Abhishek Tripathy is an Indian Revenue Service officer. His debut poetry collection *Padma & Other Poems* was published in 2019.

Odysseus's Penelope **Nandani Gupta**

I'll let the world flow through me,
It flows through my veins,
Every time I'd burn through it,
I let it torment me,

World has been unkind,
Unkind to my kind heart,
And, if God were to ask me about my grief,
I'll probably laugh,

'cause isn't it too late,
I have already made my peace,
There's no grief worth mentioning,
And, no laughter that'd light up the sky,

It is too late now,
Please don't come for me,
My eyes will remain vacant,
Empty and calm.

Nandani Gupta is a master's student of English literature at BHU.

I feel complete with
not another soul mate
but with the soul of nature.

I feel complete when I'm
with myself, only myself
my thoughts, my choices and
my dreams.

Am I self-obsessed?
Am I selfish?
Am I what I think?
Am I what I am?

No!
I'm a woman
I'm a mystery
An awareness
An essence...meaningful essence,
I'm to be loved rather than understood
Because I'm infinity.

Moramee Das, is currently a Deputy Superintendent of Police, in Guwahati, Assam.

Marriage **Srabani Bhattacharya**

I moved into a beehive
And the queen, all set
In her way, doesn't
Welcome new stings

I am an ant in a beehive
And the queen bee
Plays a long and weary game
With her drones
Every day the search for sweetness
Dies thrice at meal times
When she denies warmth
Deliberately, sadistically
Happily, and it is tiring

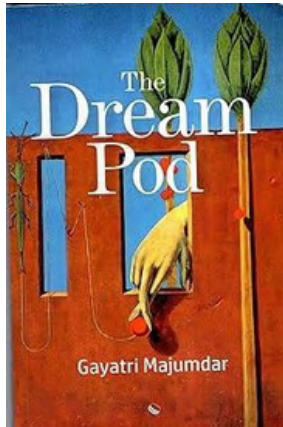
Exhausting to be an ant
Among drones who know
Their queen too well to stray
Or say no to a meal or two
Every day the same protest
Meek words ignored
At her behest.

I am an ant
Or was I?
My antlers have melted
My body is yellow
And black and lo!

I have wings
Now fluttering to fly with
Nowhere to go!

Srabani Bhattacharya currently works as a copyeditor and scriptwriter.

MEET MY BOOK

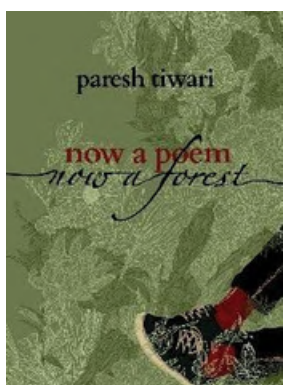
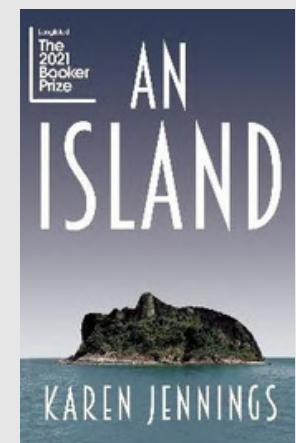


I explore a range of human emotions in this book. There is a sense of discerning detachment and self-enquiry; a certain stepping back and questioning, especially in the last section of the book titled 'Afterthoughts'. Several of the poems in the book were written through COVID-19 and self-reflection in them is evident. The book is about cognizance. Eminent critic Sukrita Paul Kumar writes that *The Dream Pod* "dispels the notion of destinations and affirms the poet's faith in the creative journey in itself."

— Gayatri Majumdar

An Island tells the story of Samuel, an old man, a lighthouse keeper living alone on a small island off the southern African coast. His life is quiet and lonely, but then a man washes up on the shore. Samuel reluctantly takes him in and nurses him to health, despite viewing him as a threat to his idyll. As he engages with the interloper, who is possibly a refugee, Samuel is confronted with his conflicted past. *An Island* explores the long shadow of colonialism on individual experiences. It was a challenging book to write because of the solitary nature of Samuel and the fact that he and the refugee do not speak the same language.

— Karen Jennings

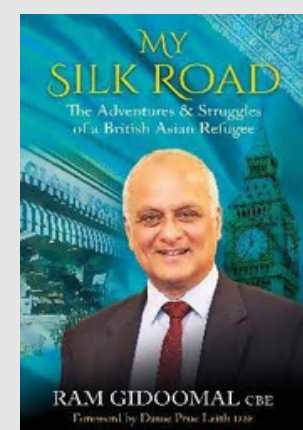


'A poem could be a confessional. The blank sheet of paper, a two-by-two box hewn from a dead tree. This poem, however, is an asylum. The words stacked up like bricks. Holding up a roof in the middle of a vast emptiness.' This book weaves poetry and prose into a self-acknowledged confessional. Divided into seven parts — 'Prologue', 'Matchbox House', 'Kami Cranes', 'A Sangai Haggles', 'Dead Petals', 'Bleached Bones', and 'Epilogue' — the book unspools relationships, both real and imaginary, against the backdrop of urban life. It uses nonlinear narratives and intimate storytelling to evoke a sense of nostalgia and yearning, depicting the passage of time and the fleeting nature of connections.

— Paresh Tiwari

For my 70th birthday, my children secretly contacted members of our extended global family to remind them to send greetings and memories. That effort triggered their desire to find out more about all these 300 family members. As I drew a family tree and shared stories, I felt prompted to write my autobiography. I knew that this was a project I must prioritize, in spite of huge competing pressures on my time: a legacy for my children and grandchildren but also for anyone else wishing to discover and learn from the challenges that the first generation of East African Indians faced in building their lives in the UK.

— Ram Gidoomal



NEW INITIATIVE

In a Quiet Corner of the Internet

The internet is not short of literary journals; there is something for practically every language and taste, and it's really a problem of plenty. Unfortunately, there is no recommendation algorithm that might work on assumptions or criteria of quality, scope, or source for this type of content. So word-of-mouth seems to be the best way to land on something good. *The Undiscovered Journal* (<https://www.undiscoveredjournal.com>) was just that until my search engine honed in on it. Proclaiming that "there's always a story around the corner", the journal features short fiction and poetry from yet-to-be-discovered Indian writers.

Launched in December 2023, the journal now has three months' worth of short stories that present quite a varied selection, from romance to humour to mystery, each accompanied by a visual—an evocative photograph or a sketch—that captures its mood. The curation is spare, with just three to four stories and a fistful of poems each month, just enough for an hour's good read. *The Undiscovered Journal* is run by Kolkata-based writer/editor Ramona Sen (*Crème Brulee*, and the forthcoming *The Lady on the Horse and Other Secrets*), whose short fiction also finds space in the collection.

— Usha Raman

PROFILES



SciCity Hyderabad is a new initiative that aims to bring science into cultural conversations in Hyderabad. Led by Somdatta Karak (somdattak@gmail.com) and Tejah Balantrapu (tejah@hey.com) it wants to creatively engage the citizens of Hyderabad in science-inspired topics and themes. Hyderabad is a city with 50+ research institutes and several prominent universities. And yet, most people in the city have never met or spoken to a scientist about the science they do. This creates a disconnect between the scientists and the citizens. Science, instead of being for the public good, remains confined to ivory towers. Scientists need to be part of the conversations about the problems the city needs to solve. They also need to make

new-age scientific solutions understandable and accessible to people. SciCity Hyderabad seeks to enable such conversations. The initiative will reach out to different cultural forums to bring science into the city's cultural conversations.

— Somdatta Karak



**ALIGARH MUSLIM
UNIVERSITY**

The University Literary Club (ULC) of Aligarh Muslim came into existence in 1973. It underwent a transformation and was renamed the University Debating and Literary Club (UDLC) on 19 August 2015. UDLC has been a flagbearer in raising unheard voices through the power of debates. The AMU Lit fest, which takes place annually under the guidance of UDLC, has been a flagbearer in raising unheard voices through the

power of debates. The AMU Lit fest, which takes place annually under the guidance of UDLC, proudly holds the title of being the third-largest student-run festival in Asia. This prestigious event has been graced by esteemed personalities such as Sanjeev Saraf, Rana Ayub, Raghuram Rajan, and many others. UDLC has showcased its exceptional skills in organizing a wide range of national and international debates, as well as various literary competitions. In their quest for intellectual excellence, UDLC also conducts events like public speaking, poetry recitation, creative writing, journalistic writing, Baitbaazi, group discussions, and quizzes.

— Aiman Khan
Convenor, Creative Writing Forum, UDLC

REPORTS

Heart-ich Hyderabad: An Exhibition of Works by Orijit Sen, September 2023

Orijit Sen's quirky and innovative collection of paintings of Hyderabad, titled "Heart-ich Hyderabad" was exhibited at the Kalakriti Art Gallery in September 2023. The amazing play on words exhibited the essence of Hyderabad's love for blended languages: Telugu, Hindu, Urdu, and Dakhni. Unlike conventional paintings that aim at perfection and realism, the paintings focussed on 'perspective': keenness for detail and a free-spirited approach to art. The collection featured paintings that showcased the beauty of the streets of Hyderabad, especially during Ramzan. There were also paintings of the everyday hustle and bustle of a common person's life. The artist's exquisitely vibrant and attractive colour palette turned the art pieces into cultural testimonies and deep-rooted social narratives. Hyderabad holds a special place in the artist's heart because of his art teacher who went out of his way to shape the artist and hone his skills. Thus, the exhibition was like his homage to Hyderabad. The exhibition strikingly reimaged the iconic Charminar amidst the snow-capped mountains of Japan, and the artist's unique aerial perspective of Laad Bazaar was also a favourite among visitors. His painting style was a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity, detail and storytelling. The exhibition was a treat for the art lovers of the city.



— Sai Varshini
Freelance writer

Remembering Gandhi, Questioning India: 75 Years After Gandhi's Assassination, 13-15 October 2023



The Goethe-Zentrum, Hyderabad hosted a series of events from 13-15 October that reflected on the many complexities of Gandhi and India, 75 years after his death. The three-day event began with a screening of the film *Ahimsa Gandhi* for school students, who attended in large numbers, followed by a vibrant discussion with the filmmaker Ramesh Sharma. The evening saw the inauguration of an exhibition based on the collection of the Aditya Arya Archive showcasing key moments in Gandhi's public life, and indeed, the nation's history. It was attended by several dignitaries such as HE Georg Enzweiler, Deputy Head of Mission, Germany Embassy. The events of day two included scintillating panel discussions with senior academics and thinkers on Gandhi and Modern Environmentalism and Gandhi and Democratic Disagreement. The discussions were well attended and had high audience engagement. The last-day events included day-long movie screenings, including classic movies on the Mahatma as well as newer ones that looked at

non-violence through a contemporary lens. Overall, it was an excellent series that remembered Gandhi 75 years after his death while bringing the ideals of the Mahatma to life.

— Urvi Desai

Beyond Dance Festival, 28-29 October 2023

The first edition of a kind of dance festival the city has never seen before. Presented by Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad and Telangana Tourism, the festival included performances in Drag, Tango, and Kuchipudi among many other genres. The festival was curated by Vaibhav Kumar Modi, a renowned Hyderabad artist himself. The two-day festival featured 10 artists in 10 different dance forms, open-to-all dance workshops, a panel discussion, and an art flea market. The festival was a celebration of dance as a universal language that transcends borders, stereotypes, times, and the ordinary. The festival was not only a celebration of dance but also a display of true inclusivity. Performers of all identities and orientations came together from all over the country to share their passion and craft with the city. The first edition of the festival was a huge success with around 400 attendees, excellent press coverage, and great testimonies from the city.



— Nooriya Vahanvaty

Stray Birds: 10 November 2023

Anand Vishwanadha is a poet and photographer of nature who has been photographing birds for almost two decades. He exhibited his bird photos at Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad. Some of the birds featured in the exhibition were the Himalayan Monal, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Little Grebe, Black Eagle, Coppersmith Barbet, Great Cormorant, and Yellow-rumped Honeyguide. He has been a bird enthusiast since childhood and his third book, *Stray Birds* is a book of bird poems—probably the only such collection ever attempted by an Indian poet writing in English. The event was well attended and enjoyed by nature lovers, birders, and everyone else. His poetry reading from his books *Ink Dries*, and *Stray Birds* was an incredible experience in the backdrop of his beautiful photographs. The poems were able to capture the essence of the photographs and enunciate them to the viewers!



— Nooriya Vahanvaty

CADALFEST Hyderabad Samburam 2023 15-16 December 2023

Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad.

CADALFEST (Celebrating Adivasi and Dalit Arts and Literature Festival) series started in 2022 in various locations in India (Kolar, Goa, Hyderabad, Ranchi, Pondicherry) and the UK (Nottingham) as an AHRC-supported initiative in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University (UK) and Paul Valéry University in Montpellier (France).

The aim of the series is to bring people from different backgrounds together, sharing perspectives and learning from each other. Creativity and empowering energy channeled through the folk and performing arts productions take centre stage. (More at <https://dalitadivasiart.wordpress.com>). The second edition CADALFEST @ Hyderabad / Samburam! was hosted by Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University on 15 and 16 December 2023. This two-day festival was organized by the Research Network on Dalit and Adivasi Literature, Nottingham Trent University, UK, and research centre EMMA at Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3, France, in partnership with Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association and collaboration with HLF.



The events included performances, roundtables, exhibitions, readings, film screenings, and dialogues to share research, celebrate marginalized performance traditions, and explore inclusive forms of creative expression. Little Dalit magazines, Dalit and Adivasi folk culture, and the many lives of the archive formed the main strands that ran through the two-day programme.

Jameela Nishat and her performers from Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association were proud to take part in CADALFEST and co-organize it. Some of the other key participants were the prominent Dalit writer Gogu Shyamala, scroll painter Rajamougili, and the Jangama Collective. The echoes between the panels and the cultural events, the careful braiding of the traditional and the experimental had the participants and the audience look forward to the future events of the series.

— Judith Misrahi-Barak and Nicole Thiara

HUMARA HYDERABAD

Bansilalpet Stepwell

The Bansilalpet Stepwell is the latest spot for cultural gatherings in the city. Built during the 17th century CE, it finds a mention as Naganah Kunta in a 1954 map published by Pharaoh & Co. The map further suggests that the well was surrounded by a garden of tamarind and palmyra trees. In 1933, a Britisher, T.H. Keyes developed a planned model village around the stepwell, and the project was funded by Seth Bansilal, a local businessman. Hence, the present name — Bansilalpet. After nearly four decades of neglect, The Rainwater Project and Telangana Urban Development Department began the restoration of the stepwell in mid-2022. Tonnes of garbage were removed, exposing the six-stage stepwell descending 50 feet into the ground. The restored stepwell has a café, an amphitheatre, and three galleries narrating the stepwell's history and the need for planned water conservation.

Address: Parsigutta, Bhoiguda, Secunderabad, Telangana 500003. **Timings:** Tuesday-Sunday, 10 am-8 pm

— Jhiam Chattaraj

BOOK REVIEWS

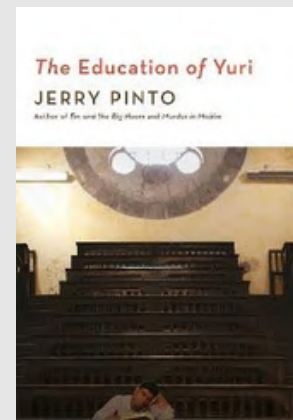
The Education of Yuri by **Jerry Pinto**. Speaking Tiger Books, 2022. 408 pages, Rs 421.

Bombay in the 1980s: 15-year-old Yuri Fonseca is about to start junior college. Yuri is a shy, slightly awkward boy who has no friends. He does not fit in. His parents died in an accident when he was very young, and he was raised by his uncle, Tio Julio, who is a gentle, constant presence in Yuri's life. The night before he starts at Elphinstone College, Yuri prays for a friend. To his surprise, he makes one almost immediately—Muzammil, a boy from a wealthy family. Soon there is a group around them, including Bhavna, a bright, feisty young woman with whom Yuri falls in love.

The book follows Yuri for the next five years as he grows up and figures out his place in the world. He becomes briefly involved with a communist group, volunteers at a refugee shelter, discovers sex, and starts to write poetry. Most of all, he starts to understand how friendships work, and how to sustain them.

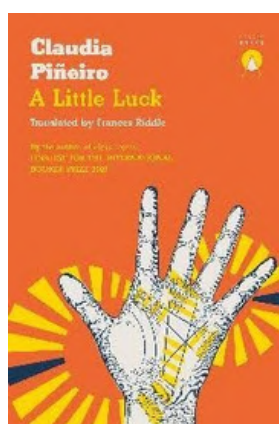
Jerry Pinto captures what it is like to be a teenager: the working out of your identity, the intense friendships, and the excitement of being on the cusp of adulthood. And the banter: clever and silly all at once, which made me quite nostalgic for my college days!

This book is also a love letter to Bombay of the 1980s and to Elphinstone, and Pinto's descriptions bring them both to life. But Pinto's greatest strength is writing about people and their relationships. He understands the dynamics between people and what makes them work. I found the relationship between Yuri and Tio Julio beautifully drawn and often moving, and the ups and downs of Yuri's friendship with Muzammil were very believable. I enjoyed watching Yuri grow up and realise that he is capable of making—and keeping—friends.



— Suroor Ali Khan

A Little Luck by **Claudia Piñeiro**. Translated from Spanish by **Frances Riddle**. Charco Press, 2023. 210 pages, Rs 1080.



This is a novel that reveals its plot little by little. Mary Lohan is flying to Argentina, to Temperley on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, to assess whether Saint Peter's School is ready to be affiliated to the Garlik Institute, a prestigious US school. Except that Mary Lohan is actually María Elena Pujol, or Marilé, who fled Temperley 20 years ago after a traumatic incident. She does not think she will be recognized—she is no longer blonde and wears brown contact lenses to hide her blue eyes. But there is one person she desperately wants to see but, at the same time, she is afraid to come face to face with him.

An incident about cars stopped at a railway crossing keeps recurring throughout the book, each time told with a little more detail until you get the full story. I won't give away any more of the plot. One of the pleasures of this book is discovering what really happened.

In reading *A Little Luck*, I knew that I was in the hands of someone who knows how to tell a story: the pacing is masterful and I liked the way it is structured. But most of all, it is the emotional truth that comes through in the novel. Piñeiro is known for her crime fiction, but her latest two novels to be translated into English, *Elena Knows* and *A Little Luck*, are more about people and society: the hypocrisy and double standards, the ease with which people judge others, and the thoughtlessness with which they can cause pain.

This is a beautifully written book, and Frances Riddle's translation does justice to it. The fact that Marilé's story unfolds gradually makes it all the more compelling.

— Suroor Ali Khan

WEB SERIES REVIEWS

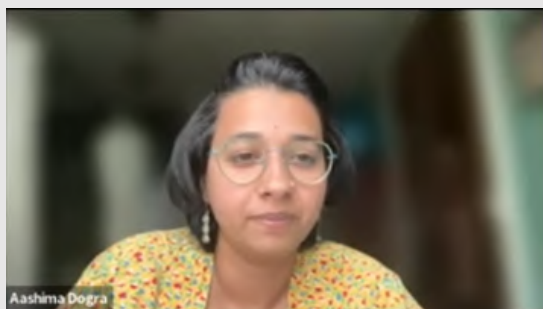
Ayali. Web series. Dir: Muthu Kumar, Language: Tamil, Network: ZEE5.

What is feminism to women who do not know such a term exists? Some recent films like *Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey* and *Darlings* which mainly show domestic abuse attempted to answer that question. This latest addition to the list is Muthu Kumar's web series *Ayali*. Like the two films, *Ayali* too uses humour as a weapon to question taboos surrounding women. *Ayali* shows how education, despite being a basic right in a democratic country, is denied to women because of physical and cultural taboos. Nobody questions why women should get married after attaining puberty. The protagonist Tamizhselvi instead of revolting against the foolishness, plays with it by simply not revealing it. Her decision helps her develop a modern relationship with her mother and the two use wittiness to fool the men around them. Their wit becomes a strong weapon and defines feminism to them. It turns into a revolution when all the women in the village protest against the patriarchal system. However, all it takes is a sensible man making other men understand how the patriarchal system has left them backward. *Ayali* is the voice of a minority of women and it gives a deeper understanding of their lives, and it is for this reason that it is worth watching. For, if the world is to become a better place, isn't it important, as a first step, to empathize with the diverse people and embrace diversity?

— Ravi Ramya, a Chartered Accountant, and an aspiring film critic

HLF ONLINE SESSIONS

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



16 September 2023

Aashima Dogra: We are in the age of modern science, as we call it. ... The problems of bias, specifically bias against women scientists, [has been] borrowed from the history of modern science... It is not a secret that when we think of science, ... the world thinks of Einstein This is because what we define as science comes from the one idea that is not inclusive. And hence, ... the construction of science has been borrowed or co-used and it's hard to break out of that. ... In India, we seem to still say things like "women can't do math" or "who does the computing in your lab" if you have only women students. In our book we've covered the invisible bias and the everyday explicit and implicit biases ... the Nobel Prizes and the Royal Society have done many crimes, invisibilizing women's knowledge in the past. [But] they have at least in the [recent] past corrected themselves—in [the last] five years the number of Royal Society fellows who are women has shot up. But in India, you see only a slow rise, and tokenism when positions are given to women.

Catch the complete conversation at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9xOg7kyN9Y&t=2557s>

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Divine Sword by **Rita Chowdhury**. Translated from the Assamese by **Reeta Borbora**. Pan Macmillan, 350 pages, Rs 699.

Originally published in Assamese as *Deo Langkhui*, this stupendous novel won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2008. It weaves an epic saga of love and sacrifice, revenge and redemption, immersing the reader in the blood-soaked tapestry of Assamese history. In English translation for the first time.

Fruits of the Barren Tree by **Lekhnath Chhetri**. Translated from Nepali by **Anurag Basnet**. Vintage Books, 240 pages, Rs 499.

Originally published in Nepali as *Phoolange*, this sharp, evocative novel is the story of a failed movement and a cautionary tale of how easily the contagion of violence can infect a community. Intensely visual and imbued with a strong sense of place, it is equally a compelling portrait of Darjeeling away from the brochures and the postcards.

The Keepers of Knowledge: Writings from Mizoram, edited by **Hmingthanzuali, Mary Vanlalthanpuui**. Zubaan, 376 pages, Rs 695

An old Mizo proverb holds that a woman's wisdom takes her only as far as the village stream. Such proverbs and beliefs have weighed heavily on the journeys of Mizo women such that even today, more than a century after the introduction of the written alphabet in Mizoram, there are barely any narratives by women in the existing body of published texts. When the editors of this volume—perhaps the first ever such anthology in the state—set out to search for writings by women, they were delighted and surprised to find a wealth of stories, narratives, personal accounts, poems, art, and more. These now grace the pages of this remarkable first-of-its-kind book.

My Poems Are Not for Your Ad Campaign by **Anuradha Sarma Pujari**. Translated from Assamese by **Aruni Kashyap**. India Viking, 176 pages, Rs 499.

First published in Assamese in 1997, *Hriday Ek Bigyapan* was an instant bestseller, going into tens of reprints in the next two decades. By taking a close look at the newly globalized India of the 1990s from a feminist lens, it poses questions about modern urban life that few Indian novels have been able to, questions that are still relevant today.

Identity and Marginality in Northeast India: Challenges for Social Science Research, edited by Hoineilhing **Sitlhou**. Orient BlackSwan, 352 pages, Rs 1250.

This volume rectifies the construction of the Northeast as a singular, homogenous territory and highlights the heterogeneity of the different groups and their unique experiences, contestations, and conflicts. It explores the connection of the history of the Northeast to the present issues affecting the region and challenges colonial, nationalist, and regional historiography and its marginalization of Northeast India.

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, films, web series, podcasts etc (in not more than 300 words).
- Reports on literary and cultural events in and around Hyderabad (in not more than 250 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).
- 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 worried 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>.