

SURABHI

Journal of Arts and Literature

The Bi-annual Journal of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

**Vol.8 No.1
(June 2017)**



Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Department of Space

Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram

SURABHI

Journal of Arts and Literature

The Bi-annual Journal of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Vol. 8 No. 1

(June 2017)

Editorial Board

Editor

P. Radhakrishnan

Associate Editor

Gigy J. Alex

Editorial Board Advisors

V. C Harris

Kurien Issac

Babitha Justin

R. Jayapal

Anand Narayanan

Editorial Office

Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Department of Space

Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram

Printed and Published at

Reprographic Facility, Library

Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Department of Space

Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram

SURABHI

Journal of Arts and Literature

The Bi-annual Journal of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Vol.8 No.1
(June 2017)



Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology
Department of Space
Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram



From the Editor's Desk

P. Radhakrishnan

Greetings from SURABHI! Good to be with you once again. We're alive and kicking thanks to the generous support from all of you.

"Connecting People with Nature" was the theme of the World Environment Day on June 5 this year. World Environment Day is a day for everyone, everywhere since 1972. IIST rose to the occasion and the IIST-zens planted over 150 saplings on the Campus.

June 5, 2017 was significant to us in one other way, too..On August 15, 1947 India won political freedom; on June 5, 2017 we acquired another kind of freedom – this time in the field of space technology. On this day we broke free from foreign dependence for launching communication satellites heavier than 2000 kg, a limit imposed by our GSLV Mk-II. Through its maiden flight, GSLV Mk-III, our biggest launch vehicle yet, helped us break that barrier. It was an enviable success. Of course, it remains for GSLV Mk-III to prove its reliability by a few more successful flights to attain the pride of place of our workhorse PSLV. Never has PSLV disappointed us since its second flight on October 15, 1994! We have no doubt that GSLV Mk-III will follow suit.

SURABHI wholeheartedly congratulates everyone in ISRO/DOS for turning our long- cherished dream for the last 20 years – not an idle dream but one backed by realism and tireless hard work – into a reality. So let us rejoice!

We present to you with great pleasure this current issue with the usual fare.

With best wishes to all.

Contents

Stage Separation	1
Film Review- Rudaali	2
A Day of Revolution?	4
Travelogue	5
The Gentleman and His Cars	6
The Unusual Wanderer	8
Paintings	10
A Big Fat Joke	12
A Reverie	18
Pencil Drawing	19
The Green Man	20
Kissan	24
Pareeksha	25
Painting	26



Prabodh Katti

Sci/Eng 'SC'

Space Applications Centre

Ahmedabad

prabodh@sac.isro.gov.in

STAGE SEPARATION

Another Hollowed out cylinder,
Metallic, charred
Makes a splash
Sending fishes and tortoises
Scurrying; panic stricken.

Some manage a look
At a trail of cloud,
Long, white; nothing
Like anything
they'd've ever seen.

But I know
What it is,
And I'm glad
That it has left us
Soaring, tearing into my mirror
Carrying hopes
and dreams and vision
And future
of those tortoises
And those fishes
And those men.

When some do return though,
It is not
An occasion to rejoice,
To celebrate.

A carrier, a bearer
Of dreams and hopes
Comes crashing;
Losing a fight
With the possessive
Mother Earth,
Dragging him back
Towards herself.

Mother who does not realise
That he,
The bearer of hope
and vision, is how
Her children will
Ensure the future
of them and us.

I pray that
As those dreams
Come crashing down,
The men who
Wove them will live
to fight another day.

Meanwhile,
I am more than happy
To accept the baggage
Shed by those
who succeed.

For I am vast
And I can take it.



P Madhuri

Sci/Engr SE,

Dy Proj Manager, SVAB Project,

SDSC SHAR

madhuri@shar.gov.in

FILM REVIEW **RUDAALI**



Women's heart is an ocean of secrets!

The 1993 film inspired by a short story of same name by Mahashweta Devi and directed by Kalpana Lajmi is a classic tale of Rajasthan where penury cripples the lifestyle and superstition belittles dignity. The wealthy upper castes constantly oppress the downtrodden in the name of religious stigma and domination. The lead role is that of an untouchable lady-Shanichari, (played by Dimple Kapadia) who had her share of fair and unfair chances, all of which she weighed on the balance of morality. She never gives in! Nor does she ever give up! She gets the name as she was born of *Shanivar* (Saturday) and her father had died soon afterwards. Her mother had eloped with a touring drama troupe.

Providence had left her bereft of all people important to her. Her father had died, her mother eloped, her alcoholic husband passed away and her mentally retarded son who was made a bonded labourer too left her. The local

zamindar was enticed by her beauty in the prime of her life, whose immoral advances she loathed. The zamindar's ailing father was on the last span of his life. According to a popular belief in Rajasthan, a departed soul finds peace only when people mourn their demise. Since he had hardly remembered doing any of his subjects any good, he was apprehensive if anyone would ever mourn if he were to pass away. Being rich, he decides to appoint a professional 'Rudaali' (a lady who gets paid to mourn at the funeral) to do the job. Rakhi Gulzar played the role.

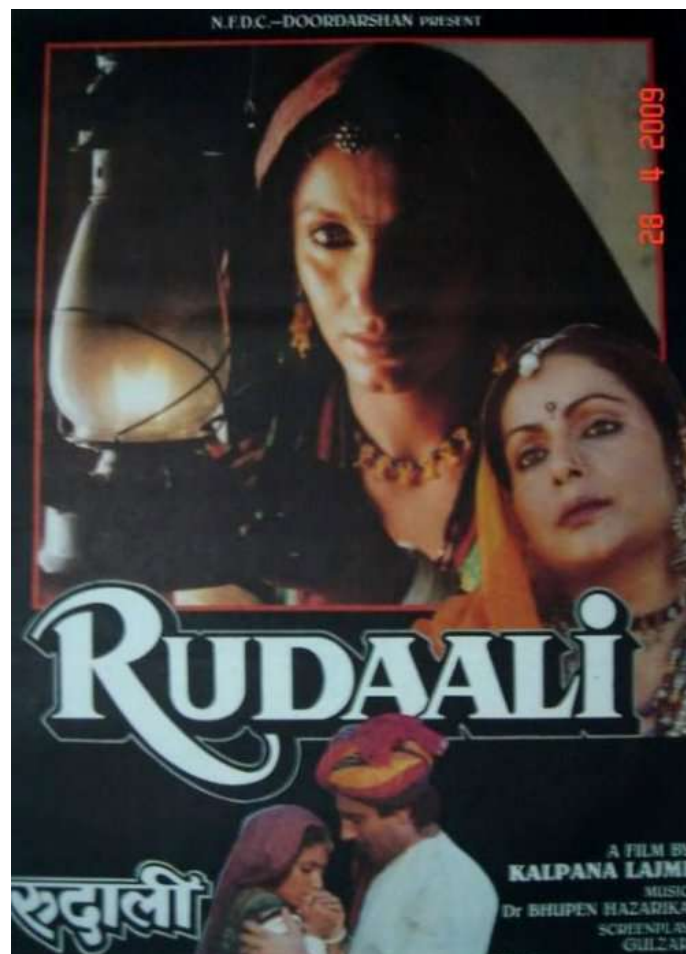
As the zamindar waited for his last call, the Rudaali was lodged at Shanichari's house. Rapport ensues between the two ladies soon and the latter shares her story. Countless challenges had dried up Shanichari's tears and she had never cried. She was not surviving to celebrate life. Instead her resolve to live was to defeat daunting obstacles. One night Bhikni (Rudaali) had been called to join her drama

troupe. Bidding goodbye to Shanichari, she tells that she would return soon to share the story of her life and that definitely would touch Shanichari enough that she cries.

In the climax when the senior zamindar finally passes away, Rudaali had not returned back. The desperate Shanichari was told that Bhikni had succumbed to plague and died. No sooner than she learnt the name of the drama troupe, she had understood that the Rudaali was none other than her own mother who had eloped years ago in search of all the pleasures and vanity that money could bring. When the popularity of drama reduced, she had got into the profession of Rudaali.

Shanichari finally cried!...nay...She sobbed!... Loudly... Uncontrollably, stimulated by the biggest grief of her life. The film, in a sense, offers a survival manual for the subalterns to follow in an unreceptive world, where they experience continuous ostracization and subjugation at the hands of the dominant classes.

The film was India's bid for the Academy Awards in Best Foreign Film category but could not secure nomination. It has won Best Film Award and Best Actress Award for Dimple Kapadia in the National Awards.





★ ★ DAY OF REVOLUTION...

Manas Maral Shrestha

Sci/Eng- SC ,Vs13616
ABSD/CMSE/VSSC,Vattiyoorkavu
Thiruvananthapuram
manas_maral@vssc.gov.in

All votes cast
prevailing the differences of thoughts.
But have to come together as
there is one to rule them all.
But kids still busy with their books and balls
listen to the story your grand paa tells
Days of chained independence. Is it really gone?
Farmers and labours toiling all day,
Eager to go home.
Someone waiting there, feast to be called
Exploitation and corruption a millennia old
Where is the time to put them on halt?
Travelling on the chariot of discoveries
fuelled by mankind's curiosity
a contented society with resonance of ideas
are way to imaginary.



Nagesh G

Engineer "SE",
Applied Optics Area,
Laboratory for Electro optics Systems, ISAC.
Bangalore
nageshg@leos.gov.in

TRAVELOGUE

Once I was travelling along with my wife and son to Darjeeling on LTC. In those days I was eligible for AC-2 Tier class on train; accordingly we travelled from Bangalore to Howrah and stayed in Rail Yatri Niwas for two days. On one early morning we had a train from Sealdah to New Jalpaiguri. Our tickets were booked from Bangalore and it was AC-2 Tier. On reaching the platform of Sealdah station and looking for AC-2 Tier coach we were given to understand that the particular train did not have AC-2 Tier coach at all. We were asked to travel by AC-3 Tier.

Since this was day journey we had no problem travelling to New Jalpaiguri by AC-3 Tier. We enjoyed the breakfast and lunch on train. As the train travelled through Malda town it was nice to see a lot of mango trees and lush green forests of Gangetic belt. It was around 6.30 PM late in the evening when we had reached New Jalpaiguri. The plan was to take a toy train from Siliguri to Darjeeling next morning.

At New Jalpaiguri station, I was supposed to collect the excess fare I had paid for travelling

in AC-2 Tier in place of AC-3 Tier. After we came out of platform, I approached a ticket counter and showed my ticket where TTE had confirmed about travelling in AC-3 Tier. But the lady sitting across the counter calculated the excess fare from Bangalore to New Jalpaiguri and handed me a big sum of money. I was amused at this and said this amount is too high. But she argued and said this is what happens in telescopic fare and she had calculated AC-3 Tier fare from Bangalore to New Jalpaiguri. I could understand this miscalculation immediately asked the lady to calculate AC-3 Tier fare from Sealdah only and not from Bangalore. Further, I also explained to her that I have travelled in AC-2 Tier from Bangalore to Howrah. I was holding the cash in my hand and returned to her the entire amount. I vaguely remember the amount was about Rs 2500/- in the year 2004. Her eyes glittered and I could see her face showed immense relief. She took my hand and held in her both hands and exclaimed "thank you Dada".

I vividly remember this incident even today and the joy on her face is fresh in my memory.



Prof. A Chandrasekar
Registrar, Dean (Academics)
IIST, Thiruvananthapuram
registrar@iist.ac.in

The Gentleman and His Cars

He is the first person that I get to see when I escort my daughter from my house in a multi-storied apartment to the road in front of our building. I accompany my daughter every working day at 6:15 AM and wait for her school bus. The gentleman, whom I am referring to, is in his sixties, tall, and somewhat on the heavier side with a friendly demeanor. It was clear that he owned the independent house that he lived in across my apartment. From the outside, one could notice and appreciate that the house was large and tastefully built. What struck me most was that between the small portion in front of his house and the main gate was parked three cars; one aligned along the gate while the other two were parked perpendicular to the first and one behind the other.

I realized that he had three cars since he ensured that two of the three cars were (on rotation) out on the road while I was waiting for my daughter's school bus. One could immediately sense his love for his cars from the way that he handled them. The three cars were routinely washed and it was evident that

they were in very good condition. After getting two of the three cars onto the road, he used to call for his wife. The lady of the house would invariably join him; he would then motion her to occupy the driver's seat of one of his cars and would join her next to the driver's seat. It was abundantly clear to any onlooker that the lady of the house had the least interest in driving her car. I had really no idea how far they drove off as I invariably returned to my home after putting my daughter in her school bus.

By the time I get down to the road to go to my office, I can see the man putting back all the cars back into his compound. I did not get to speak to the man and I did not know his name either. Evidently the man and his wife were the only occupants in their house. I was unable to comprehend as to why the man was virtually forcing his wife to drive everyday in the morning when she did not evince any interest in driving. I also used to wonder the need for three cars for a household having only two people with only one of them displaying driving skills.

The above charade continued for about two months until one day when I could immediately perceive something was amiss in the opposite house. The main gate was completely open and the opposite house was filled with large number of people with scores of cars parked on both sides of the road. I noticed a small mast with a black cloth tied to it being prominently displayed at the main gate. Quickly it dawned on me that the master of the house had passed away.

I gathered over the next couple of days that the gentleman of the opposite house was suffering from 'liver cancer' and that his two children (both sons) who are based abroad have been duly informed. It transpired that the gentleman himself was quite wealthy as he had worked on a lucrative assignment in the Middle East for about 30 years before returning home.

I felt bad at the sudden passing away of the man and quickly realized the real reason for his persistence in improving his wife's driving skills. The man evidently knew that time was running out for him and was desperate in helping his wife in her driving. Furthermore, it dawned on me that the man wanted his wife to take good care of all his three cars when he is dead and gone. My respect for the man went up and was fully sympathetic to his concern for his cars.

Days passed by and with my daughter changing her school (with different school timings), I did not get to know firsthand how the lady of the house was handling the three cars. It became clear that the gentleman's death had left its deep imprint on the house as well as on his wife. I didn't see the lady of the house venturing out of her house driving her

car. Observing from outside, I realized that the number of cars parked got reduced from three to one with only the car parked parallel to the main gate remaining.

Then finally on one day, I got a glimpse of the lady of the opposite house opening the gate of her house and coming over to the road. She was looking towards the house and the car parked parallel to the main gate was being driven in reverse gear and was slowly getting out of the house. My curiosity aroused; I was keen to see the driver of the car. The driver turned out to be a girl in her mid-twenties. Either she was one of her distant relatives or a new female driver. The lady of the house closed the main gate and went round the car to get into the seat adjacent to the driver's. The car sped away.

The master of the house with his love of cars had possibly not expected the situation to develop the way it had unfolded. He had desired that the cars be looked after the same way that he was taking care of them. He would not have foreseen the situation where only one of the three cars remained in his house with the other two disposed. What must have been most hurting was the fact that all his perseverance and persistent efforts to improve his wife's driving skills have not yielded any positive result. The only consolation for the gentleman is of course that even if the cars were not to be cared for in the way he took care of them, it is less likely to encounter an accident and prove fatal to his wife.

All said and done, the gentleman must be turning in his grave and murmuring the following 'Man Proposes; Wife Disposes'

THE UNUSUAL WANDERER



Subramanyam Jaswanth

Scientist/Engineer SC
NARL, Gadanki
jaswanth93@gmail.com

I open my eyes and see the vast skies
Illuminated at night, the stars are alive
Giving birth to elements as I write a rhyme
Explosive energies, emitted with time.

My mind wanders as I ponder the design
Wonder the works and the science that's behind
The pursuit of truth is the true destination I find
The scientific insights about truths and lies.

Stellar sights as the stars die
Only to reform different and come alive
At the core does gravity lie
The inevitable force that pulls together all of life.

Keeping the universe alight
Turning the gears just right
Hence a new day arrives
and we open up our eyes.

Push and pull us together
In this infinite joy ride
The journey of life
We observe and make real, all in front of our eyes.

Close your eyes and still feel the warmth as the Sun rises
Dedicating a new day to us and shine light in all of our lives
Each day, a different path lies ahead for all that thrives
A hundred ways our paths part but all combine.

What goes around comes around and all the parallel paths combine
As the space curves and gravity pulls together all that moves in time
Slipping through the curves, the light from the stars reaches our eyes
Travelling for eons, the wanderer rests in the pupil of our eyes.

Where we begin and where we end the journey of our life?
Is a question only answered after facing all that's in front of our eyes
We wander in this infinite space for all the years of our lives
Yet not knowing where to go, the unusual wanderer arrives.



Dr. Jayanthi S
Assistant Professor
Department of Physics
IIST Thiruvananthapuram
jayanthi.s@iist.ac.in







Dr. Babitha Justin
Assistant Professor
Department of Humanities
IIST, Thiruvananthapuram
babithajustin@gmail.com

✿ Big Fat Joke

Seriously, this is not a real story.

I am narrating this story for a specific reason. That is because my readability as a writer has risen over the years. Well, it is not that I write stories that excel or that I have a specifically rich writing style and technique. I am read because everyone thinks it is my story. This is something I have learned as a writer. People are curious about you. Especially your personal life, or what happened to your past or what happened behind closed doors. That is precisely why biographies sell, why a sex worker's story becomes the rage of the town and why people love Page 3 news that tell us about the discreet, spicy lives of the rich and the famous. We are all looking for spicy bits in other people's lives, especially after hiding our own muck with expert ease.

That is precisely why I don't want to satiate your curiosity. I want to tell you an unreal story this time. An unreal story of my first day in a Technical Institute. Now, to increase my readability, I do add a lot of exaggerations and masala into my narrative. It is up to you to discern the fictionality in the story. I leave that entirely to you.

This story happened fourteen years back. I was considerably young, immature as I always was and very fearful of life. I always wondered what people would think and how they will react and how they would accept me as a human being. I lived to please my family, friends and authorities, always willing to please. People thought I was sweet and my eyes told them I am very docile in a bovine way. Only my husband and my parents knew

that out of the dasavtar, a Narasimha would awake in me, capable of drawing blood with my tongue. I kept my Narasimha dormant and subdued till one day I fell in love with him; the boldest, bloody thirsty lout in me. He is the avatara I am in love with, and my own narcissistic self image. Now to complement the story, let me take an anticipatory bail, otherwise, you readers can make my life complicated for me. So here it goes:

Any trace of biography, autobiography, impersonation, etc, in this story is purely coincidental.

The world is such a huge place, with so many combinations, permutations, replications and re-enactments of the same instance called life, which accords, if luck prevails, a momentary blink of sixty years on an average. Therefore, any resemblance to living or dead persons and incidents is also purely coincidental.

I still remember my first day as an English teacher in a technological institute. That I believed was the worst thing that happened to me, I thought foolishly, and I changed my opinion, suddenly and sullenly, the day my salary was credited. Thank God for all these small mercies, an agnostic in me sent a few missives to heaven, and the sceptic in me went into a deep Rip Van Winkle phase.

It was a Technological University like no other, situated in the heart of the Deccan capital, where the sun swept over you roughly during summers, and a wild winter teased your skin through your sweating sweaters. I was young and full of life then, a sprightly 26 year old

straight out of a university and full of left-liberal values; political correctness was not a sin then.

The first day, I dawdled clumsily into the staff room, which had an oval conference table on one side and many chairs on the other. On the chair which was prominently placed in the middle sat a middle-aged woman with conspicuous good looks, rouged and lip-sticked and with a hair-do that looked like suddenly a surprised sparrow conspired to lay eggs on her hair. I looked at her prominent nose, on which shone a couple of diamond shafts. I assumed she was the Head.

"Hi, I am Aparna Nayana, I came to join the department".
"Ah!"

The lady looked up imperiously, I saw to my horror that she was chewing betel leaves, and she walked to the window nearby, hawked, put her forefinger and middle finger on her lips and spat into the void, daubing the green outside with a murderous red.

"Don't mind this, ok? This has become a kind of adat and I quite enjoy it". She pointed to her mouth before handing over some papers to me.

"Fill them up, fast," She ordered through her betel juice filled mouth.

I stumbled with my pen, and there were five identical forms to be filled in. I did that patiently, of course, much to my chagrin.

"Caste, you have not written your caste here", the head insisted.

"I don't believe in it", I was impatient to do away with filling up.

"Arre, fill it up, you never know what kind of benefits you will get". The lady, by now I found out her name, Prof. Tasia Naik persisted.

I wrote "General" reluctantly.

Prof. Naik peeped in and exclaimed, "General?" Then as a monologue to herself, she said in an audible tone.

"Difficult to detect caste among South Indians, all have black skin". I was amused and sniggered with embarrassment. Many years of my university life I have never witnessed such blatant racism and casteism. I also felt my dark skin burning under her sudden scrutiny.

"Now settle down. As you are new and fresh from a university, I have to acquaint you with some rules", she looked at me from top to bottom.

"Number one: No dress codes," she looked at me disdainfully in my saree, and I cursed that moment when my mother hollered over the phone to wear a saree and look proper and teacher-like.

"Look at me, I am always in my casuals, and I prefer my Fab India kurtas and my Reebok flip-flops any day". I was happy that I do not have to go through the unpleasantness of draping five yards on my body every day. "But keep an eye on the girl students, their skirt seams climb up their knees. When you see that report it to me."

"Number two: There is a protocol for everything. The procedure here is elaborate, and almost uncircumventable at any cost, except when you get yourself into the good books." She said without batting her eyelids. "Whose good books?" I asked, suddenly my heart ringing out an alarm.

"Arre, good books of the management. What else?" her irate voice rang and the nest on top of her head shivered. "Everything depends on being there. From your promotions to purchase of your stationery"

"How do you get in there?" I asked hiding my alarm.

"Watch out for the powerful men and women in the hierarchy and respect them, be subservient to them, never tread them on their toe." She looked at me with a vicious smile and said: "Or simply, follow me."

The first day itself, I realised that I was going to work in a precarious place with lots of written and unwritten rules. Somehow I felt that Tasia will bail me out, despite her blatant crudeness, there was something sweet and likeable about the woman.

"Rule number three. We are in a Technical institute, Engineers will be speaking about thermodynamics, or VLSI or Fuzzy logic or what not. You too invent something and speak like an intellectual. Never let yourself down with ordinary dialogues."

"Speak feminism?" That was what came into my mind for the first time.

"Never, never make that mistake, feminism is a cuss word here. Almost a dirty word. Be feminine, not a feminist"

"What about Derrida, Agamban, and Foucault?" I asked sensing the Puck in me resurrect within.

"Wonderful! The tougher the better! These technocrats are happy to think English teachers teach only Shakespeare and grammar. The heavier the jargon, the better." She began chuckling at her own idea, as she opened her lunch box daintily and offered me some cut fruits and vegetables.

"Diet, look good, talk pleasingly, all these are going to make a big difference in your life. Look busy always, if you want pull some hair into your eyes to look it." I stood there open mouthed for a while. I need to brush up my literary theory brouhaha before getting into teaching.

"What about the students here? What about their feedback, our publications, seminars, conferences, research?"

Tasia laughed a hearty laugh, her betel juice spattered on my face.

"It is your conduct that matters, the rest is all secondary. You think it matters in a technical institute like ours what you write, publish and teach? Aree, our policy is show me the face and I will tell you the rules. We are the rule makers and breakers here."

I was dumbfounded for a while, but I was already feeling adventurous. I was terribly

fond of accosting dangers, as my mother always used to say.

Jumping into a pond without knowing to swim, walking through an unmanned railroad, nursing an immense desire to carry an AK 47 had all been part of my secret desires. I thought probably this is the moment I had been waiting for and probably, this is the danger I am going to live with till I choose to retire. I have told you already, my Narasimha loves that attitude.

When I looked unperturbed, Prof. Tasia invited me for a Faculty Crowd meeting.

"Good that you joined on an important day; we have a Faculty Crowd meeting."

"What's that?"

"It is a monthly meeting of all faculty members chaired by the Principal. Come along, I will introduce you to all the namoone out there", Prof. Tasia walked with a shuffled gait, but I couldn't help but admire the womanly grace of her springing walk.

I followed her to a huge conference hall which was half empty. She shoved me to be seated near the Principal's seat, and I sat there glued to my destiny.

The Principal, Prof. Bakshi came in and all of us rose. He wore thick glasses and had a well-oiled slick puff on his head.

"Hello Ms. Aparna, how are you? He asked with a wide grin, lowering his chin to meet my gaze.

"Dear friends, Meet Ms. Aparna, our new grammar teacher in the Humanities Department".

The faculty members who sprinkled in nodded at me. I nodded back. The lady with thinning hair line, who was working on her lap top which looked like an extension of her arm, looked up suddenly and snapped at me.

"TG or PS?" frankly I did not understand. I was only aware of my already big eyes almost popping out of its sockets.

"Transformative or Phrase structural?" she asked again with a leer.

"A combination of both" I mumbled. I had heard these terms only in the linguistic class and I was not sure of what is what. The lady went back to her lap top with a laconic smugness.

"She is a Molecular Biologist, I am sure she just googled these terms right now" Professor Tasia consoled me sprinkling betel juice on my face.

The meeting began with all the faculty members staring at the screen right in front of them. The screen said, Result analysis. There were different graphs of various structures on the screen. Every subject had a graph for different grades, and the principal insisted that the graph should form a curve, tapering off in both the ends of outstanding and failed students.

"Every graph should look like a dolphin," a lean professor with a head full of hennaed

hair, laughed at his own mirth. I wanted to laugh too, is it to create these dolphins, we teach? Is it as easy as this?

A mathematician interfered.

"We should look it from the sum totality of scalars and vectors."

"What nonsense! We should look at directions only, just the vectors" Another dissenting voice chimed in. He wore a T shirt wrapping his muscles and he flexed his muscles every time he spoke. His aggression took me by surprise. What was that about, I wondered. He flexed his muscles, burst his anger bubble and he massaged his mouche and goatee with disdain.

"I will do the analysis as I please; I do not need Faculty motley to tell me that!"

Prof. Tasia leaned to me and giggled, "The angry man among faculty, no one exactly knows why and what he angry with". I disguised my chortle as a string of coughs.

Suddenly, the door spun open and a trail of white liveried men entered carrying tray of food. The faculty relaxed their bristles a bit. Sumptuous smell of food flowed in; I nearly drooled at the smell.

The Reader, whose name I do not remember, who sat uncomfortable with his tight shirt and buttons straining to break free from his fleshy bond, pounced on the saucer filled with vada, and spiced nuts. He stuffed his mouth, clandestinely checking out if others were looking, but fortunately others weren't

looking, they also started attacking their plate leaving aside the graphical details of the results which hung on the projector wall like unwanted apparitions. The liveried men brought in black tea, milk tea and coffee according to the tastes of the faculty sitting there, and everyone munched on merrily as there is no tomorrow.

The Reader spoke in between his bites,

"What about the harassment case among the driving staff?"

I was all ears. Tasia whispered to me,

"Twenty five percent of the drivers are women, so there are issues."

"Wherever there are women, there are issues", laughed a bespectacled bald man who wore his thin braided beard like a trophy, looking at all the women present there.

Others laughed at the joke too. The balding man looked pleased at his own joke.

The Reader interfered and rolled his words along with the vada he bit into,

"I have a solution, as they are temporary staff, fire all the fair women".

The entire crowd guffawed and approved. I choked at the bite, wondering if she should laugh or cry. Something bubbled inside me, and I realised that it was the distaste for such a crowd. But this was my first day at the work place and I was telling myself that I should not throw the baby with the bath tub. I bit my tongue. Prof. Tasia was restless, she jangled

her keys and whispered into her colleagues ears, giggling and sharing jokes.

After an elaborate eating ritual, some of them belched and relaxed and suddenly the technicality and momentum of result analysis was lost in moments of gustatory satiety.

The Principal looked at me and asked:

“Now introduce yourself, we have a new member among our faculty”

I shuddered for a while and called out for my Narasimha and got up with quaking knees.

“I am Aparna Nayana, and I am from the University of Hyderabad. At present I am doing my Ph D in Jadavpur University”.

The balding, braided bearded man asked me, “So you haven't finished your Ph D”.

I gulped for some fresh air, like fish out of water and managed to mumble a “No”

The muscle flexing man in the T shirt looked up as if I had done something terribly wrong. I could see his veins tense up on his neck, as if he was hiding some great emotion. Anger perhaps.

“What is your research topic”? He managed to ask.

“I work on the visual narratives and gender construction in colonial travel narratives” I said, guilty of my research all of a sudden, I do not know why and how.

“What?” The muscle man nearly jumped out

of his chair.

He could not just suppress his surprise,

“What sort of mandates the MHRD inflicts on world class institutes!!”

“I am sorry I didn't get you”, I managed to slammer

“You come all the way to teach grammar in a world class institute which is tomorrows promise for scientific and technological progress. The MHRD has made Humanities mandatory, that's what I meant”.

Silence. All the dialogues I used to have with myself got caught in my throat.

Somebody tried to help him with that statement,

“Like, do you need to teach Shakespeare and Grammar to students who deal with the latest technology. Tomorrow, they just have to insert a chip they made in their brains”

Some other helping words, spun my head around, I wanted to sink.

“Maybe, they will find a chip of osmosis and eliminate teaching learning forever”.

Everyone laughed and laughed more. I too smiled.

Tasia consoled me, take everything as a joke, though all of us have big degrees, we joke too often”

I sat down with some very important lessons learned.

That day I bundled my Narasimha out of my mind, and placed a little crafty Vamana to see the world a big fat joke I can tread upon.

That was the first day of my teaching career.

More later in the upcoming issue...



Aman Gupta

Scientist / Engineer - SC
SMPDD
Structures Group, ISRO Satellite Centre
Bangalore
aman@isac.gov.in

A Reverie

And together we run under the sun, the grass crushed and stamped by our feet.
Laughing like free children, bodies close, love so eminent that there is nothing called defeat.

Out there, under the shade of a tree, we spend hours waiting for the moon lit sky.
The hours accumulating like grains of sand until they bury us together where we lie.

Leaning against the tree trunk, cupping your face, I kiss your red lips tasting your love.
You caress my hair while I rest on your lap, gazing at the moving leaves above.

Your forefinger runs down my chest following the drop of sweat racing down its course.
The sweat gathering in the declivity of spiral pit of my navel ending in a puddle with no remorse.

Your fingers tickle around my naked torso, like a canvas being painted by different colors.
As if a poet is searching for the right words to define his feelings, to complete his verse.

Your presence in my thirsty selfish heart is like a scribble on a wall.
No matter how many times anyone tries to remove it, a bit of it always comes in front of all.

And your absence confuses my soul, dazzles it with haunting path and blind turn.
You may fade away in the air, lose the grip of my hand but my heart would still yearn.

I remember all the moods that you ambushed me with; sadness, happiness, face filled with fret.
But amidst the choices I made in my life, you will always be something I won't regret.





Swastika Mandal
ID: SC16B139
Engineering Physics
IIST, Thiruvananthapuram
swastikamandal8299@gmail.com

Pencil Drawing





Sabir Alam

SC code-SC14B030
Aerospace Engineering
IIST, Thiruvananthapuram
sabir.avanti@gmail.com

The Green Man



Sitting in the library, looking through the glass panes, I see this man struggling with joining two pipes (as usual minding his own business). Wearing same shirt and pants, often seen without slippers, but wearing a beautiful Irish cap over his head covering his grey hairs. And I think, the grey beard too adds to his aura.

I have always wanted to know about him. But what makes him so special is you rarely find him interacting with anybody and what bewilders me the most is that you never find any emotions or expression on his face, always maintaining the same composure on his face.

Very recently I came to know about a concept known as Avadhut, This concept emanates from one of the ancient spiritual traditions of

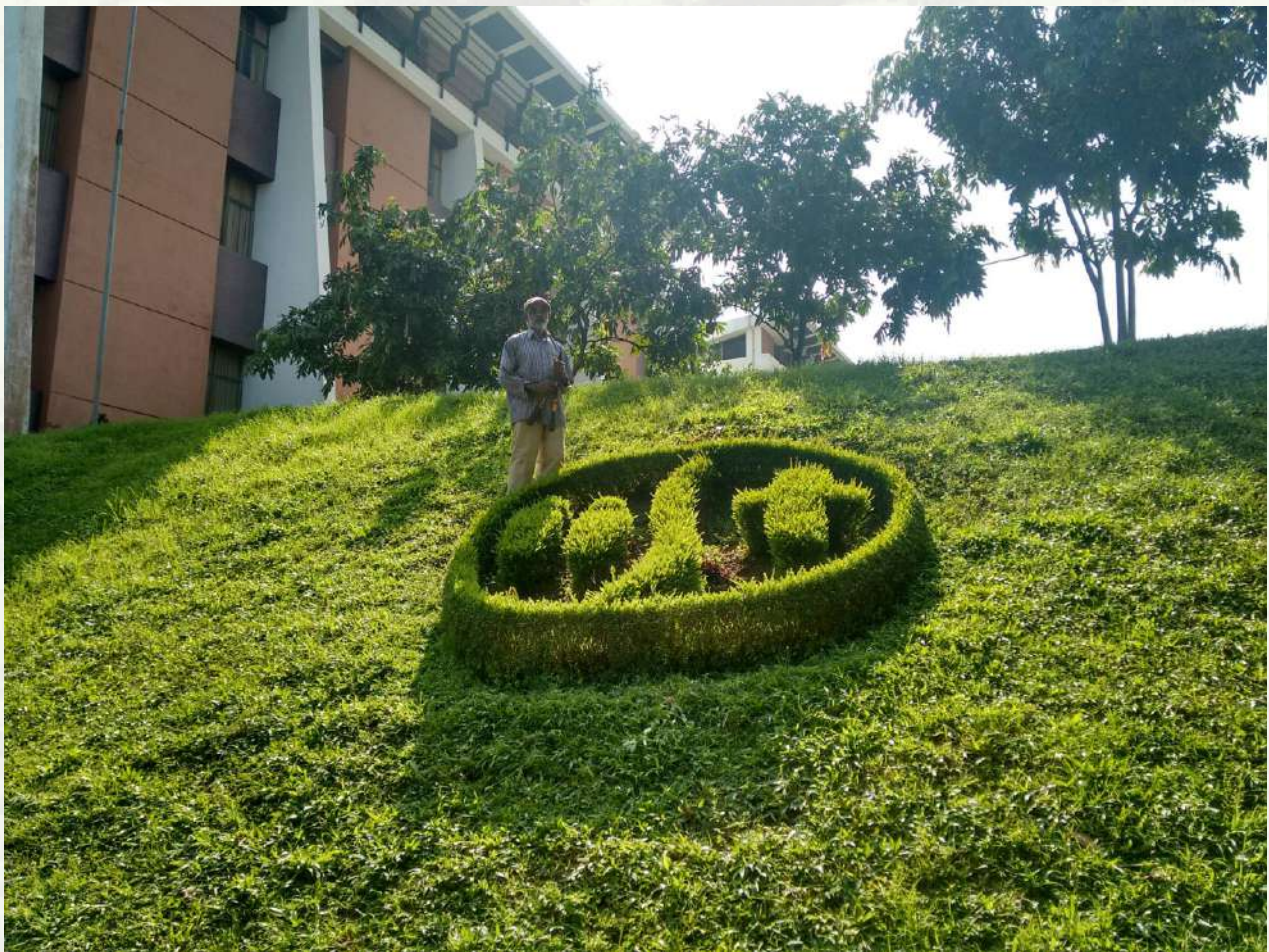
India. We can identify a kind of eccentric holiness in such persons who are under the spell of Avadhuta. An Avadhuta can move beyond one's own interests and welfare. Such people are less affected by common worldly problems, not hypocritical, they can act without considering social positions, and move beyond the practices and forms ascribed to them by the social conventions. He is such a person.

He is our Earth Man

He will be there right in the campus as all the students and teachers start their business in college, the "one with green thumbs." Though the institute is the dream come true of many visionaries, its green pastures and meadows are maintained like this because of the

persistent hard work of this man in cap. He starts his job at 9 0' clock, and will continue it without any impatience till 5: 30. His continuous presence in the campus garden makes him one with the landscape of the place, like a banyan tree or a frangipani tree. His attire also camouflages him with the garden, either he will be in brown shirt and khaki pants, or grey pants and cream shirt. He is our Earth man, very much merged with the land and nature, who knows the heart throb of nature, and the mood swings of the landscape. When will it rain? Will it be a hot day?, Will it be sunny? Will there be thunder and storm?, Is it going to drizzle?, etc.

Very rarely he looks at the passers by, and never indulges in others' business. The dedication and sincerity that he extends to do his job is worth mentioning. Either it will be in mending the garden, sometimes using his own hands to remove the weeds, or by using a hoe, some times works with metal rake, and for pruning the plants, using a very long scissors, sometimes seen with a mower, sometimes seen in the garden mixing compost and manure, sometimes watering the plants, but he never gets bored, and never gets restless. His passion and love for the job is evinced in the way in which he treats the garden.



Once we were talking about the vegetable garden. We planted the seeds of snake gourd in the garden. Though the plants sprouted plenty of flowers none of them matured into fruits, and we asked him why it is so. He gave a very innocent smile and replied “They are cheating us, they are all fake flowers.” He gives personal attention to each and every plant, cleaning up the garden by watering the plants every day, taking enough care with a motherly affection. The only thing that irritates him is some one disturbing his plants. He gives a very sublime position to his greens, and he will be there shouting at those who dare to pluck a flower or break a shoot.



and every tree in the campus. Every day he conducts a tree walk. Not even a single day without talking to the trees. Of all his professions he enjoys to be a gardener. The individual attention that he gives to each and every plant in the campus, and the amazing inquisitiveness with which he mends each and every tree, instils a special curiosity in all of us. His hard work is the secret behind the lushness of the greenery that sprawls all around us.



Somashekharan Nair started his career as a film representative, then he became a theatre manager, and later a film check inspector. Thus he was very much into the cinema world before he gets into IIST. That may be the reason for his special affinity and closeness to the panoramic view of the landscape and scenic beauty of nature. He prefers flowering plants to the ornamental type. He knows each



He is so immersed in his profession that he never interferes with others when they are at work and he hardly looks at others when he is engaged in his work. In the course of his solo travel inside the campus mending his plants, all his friends are always ready to help him. This man is so dedicated to his work that he compels us to rethink the way we look at our profession. Every time we watch him, we remember what the great poets of all ages exhorted us- to be with nature as she is your

best friend and companion- Every time we talk about him, we recollect the nature poems of William Wordsworth, Robert Frost and Henry David Thoreau. His only concern is the trees, and plants, and their flowers, not bothered about his wages, not bothered about the timing, rarely think about the food that waits for him in his lunch box. The only one guy that is unanimously popular among the students, teachers and staff is none other than this very curious Green Man of IIST.



Photo Courtesy : Anul Bhaven
Picture Courtesy : Micky Basil



Harshit Vallabhaneni

SC16B058

Aerospace Engineering

IIST, Thiruvananthapuram

vallabhaneniharshith@gmail.com

किसान

हे किसान, हे निशान ।

तू है देश का निशान ॥

बस एस पल की बारिश ।

यही है तेरी ख्वाहिश ॥

नहीं हो रहा है कुछ भी अच्छा ।

तड़प रहे हैं बीबी - बच्चा ॥

घर मकान बेचा ।

फिर भी तेरे पास कुछ न बचा ॥

मिट रहा है तेरा हौसला ।

इसलिए तूने लिया मरने का फैसला ॥

नही करती कुछ भी सरकार ।

इसलिए तूने किया मौत को स्वीकार ॥

तूही दम तोड़ ।

तो देश को कौन संभाले ॥

हे किसान, हे किसान ।

तू है देश का निशान ॥





Deepak Gopalakrishnan
SC14D003
Research Student
Dept. of Earth and space Sciences
IIST, Thiruvananthapuram
deepakg.14@iist.ac.in

പരീക്ഷ

പത്താം ക്ലാസ്സിലെ
ഗുസ്തിയുടെ
കണക്കെടുക്കാനിറങ്ങുമ്പോൾ
വഴിയിൽനിന്നാരോ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിച്ചതാണ്. 'ബോധമില്ലാത്തവനും
ഒന്നിനും കൊള്ളാത്തവനും വരെ
ജയിക്കുമത്രെ!' - അതിനാൽ ഒന്നും പേടിക്കാനില്ലപോലും -

പ്ലസ്സുകളുടെയും മൈനസ്സുകളുടെയും
ബഹളങ്ങളില്ലാത്ത
'സി' കൾക്കും 'ഡി' കൾക്കും ഇടയിൽ
കൂട്ടത്തിൽപ്പെടാതെ
ഒരു
പരിവേഷവും കൂടാതെ,
ഏച്ചുകെട്ടിയ
മലയാളത്തിന്റെ ഒരു 'എ' പ്ലസ്.

മറ്റൊരാളുടെയും
പ്ലസ്സുകളിൽ,
കൂട്ടത്തിൽപ്പെടാതെ,
എന്റെ പ്ലസ്സുകളും
ജയത്തിന്റെ പരിവേഷങ്ങളില്ലാതെ,
ഞാനും

വീണ്ടും
ആരൊക്കെയോ പറയുന്നുണ്ട് - 'ബോധമില്ലാത്തവനും
ഒന്നിനും കൊള്ളാത്തവനും വരെ
ജയിക്കാറുണ്ടത്രെ!'

ഒന്നു മരിച്ചു നോക്കിയാലോ?

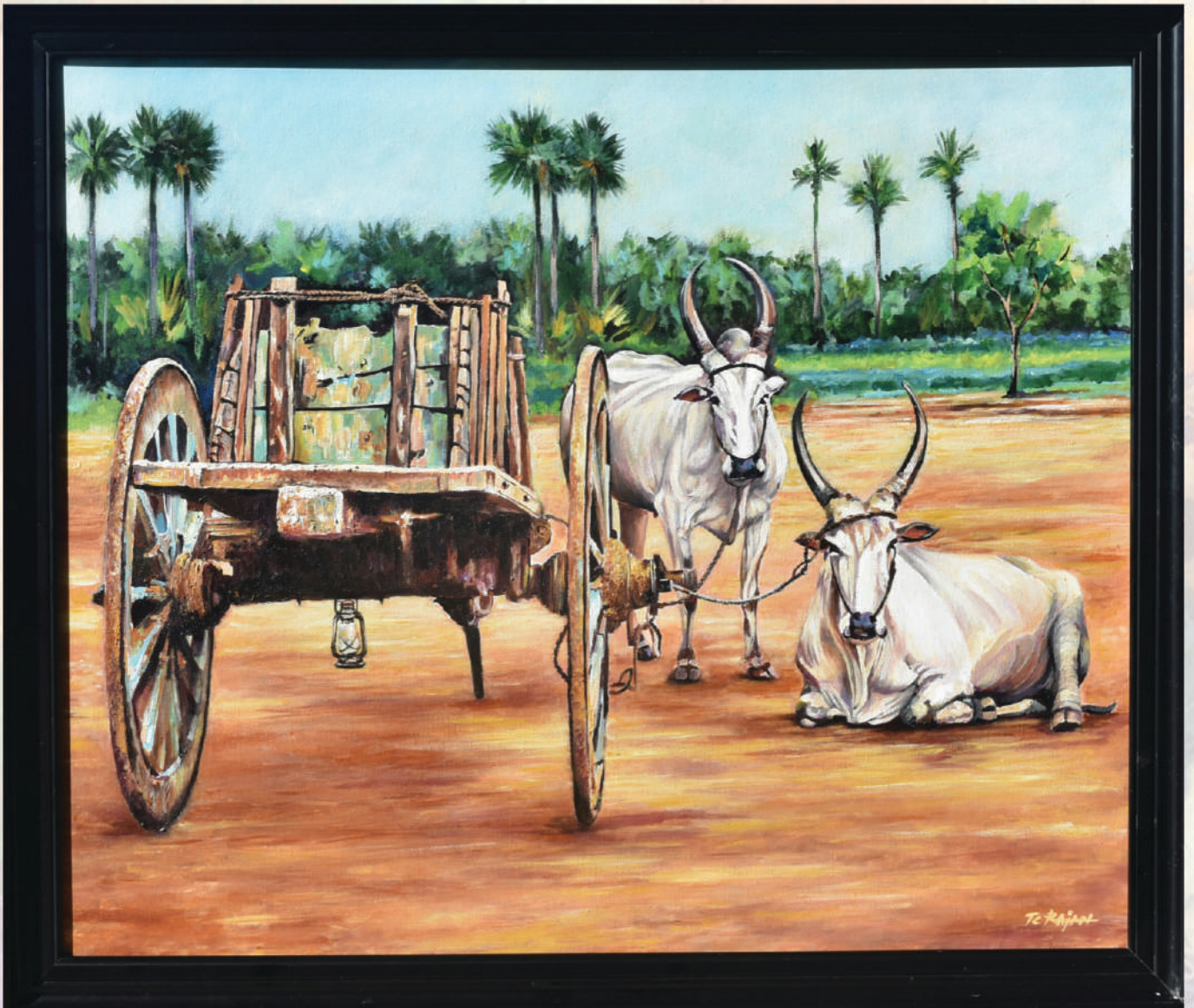
കുറിപ്പ് : എഴുതുന്നതിൽ 99% പേരും വിജയിക്കുന്ന ഇന്നത്തെ **SSLC** കാലത്ത്, യോഗ്യത നേടുന്നതിൽ പലർക്കും
കാര്യവിവരമില്ല എന്ന രീതിയിൽ ചർച്ചകളും ഉയർന്നുവരുന്നു. ഈ യോഗ്യത നേടുന്നവർ യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ
യോഗ്യരാണോ എന്ന വിഷയത്തിനെക്കാൾ ഗൗരവമുള്ള വിഷയം യോഗ്യത നേടാതെ പോകുന്ന 1% കുട്ടികളുടെ
കാര്യമാണെന്ന് തോന്നുന്നു. അതായത്, പരീക്ഷ നടത്തുന്നതിന് യോഗ്യരെ കണ്ടെത്താനല്ല, മറിച്ച് 'ഒന്നിനും
കൊള്ളാത്തവരെ' കണ്ടെത്താനാണ് എന്നു വന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. അത്തരം പരീക്ഷകളോട് ഒരു വിധോജ്ഞിപ്പ്.



T C Rajan

Senior Project Assistant
Main Accounts Section
VSSC, Thiruvananthapuram
tc_rajan@vssc.gov.in

Painting



Designed by

Shiju U S

Reprographic Facility, Library
IIST, Thiruvananthapuram

SURABHI

Journal of Arts and Literature

The Bi-annual Journal of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Vol.8 No.1
(June 2017)

Surabhi: Journal of Arts and Literature is a bi-annual art and creative journal published by Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology. It publishes creative and critical literary pieces like short stories, poems, memoirs, film/book reviews, travelogues, interviews, reports, sketches, photography, science fiction, pencil drawings and paintings. It has special interest in boosting the creative talents of people from various Centres of DOS. It intends to publish articles in English, Hindi, and in any Indian regional language. The Journal invites submissions in the above category for publication.

You may please send soft copies of your submissions to the Associate Editor to the following e-mail ID:

gigyjalex@gmail.com / gigy@iist.ac.in



Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Department of Space

Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram