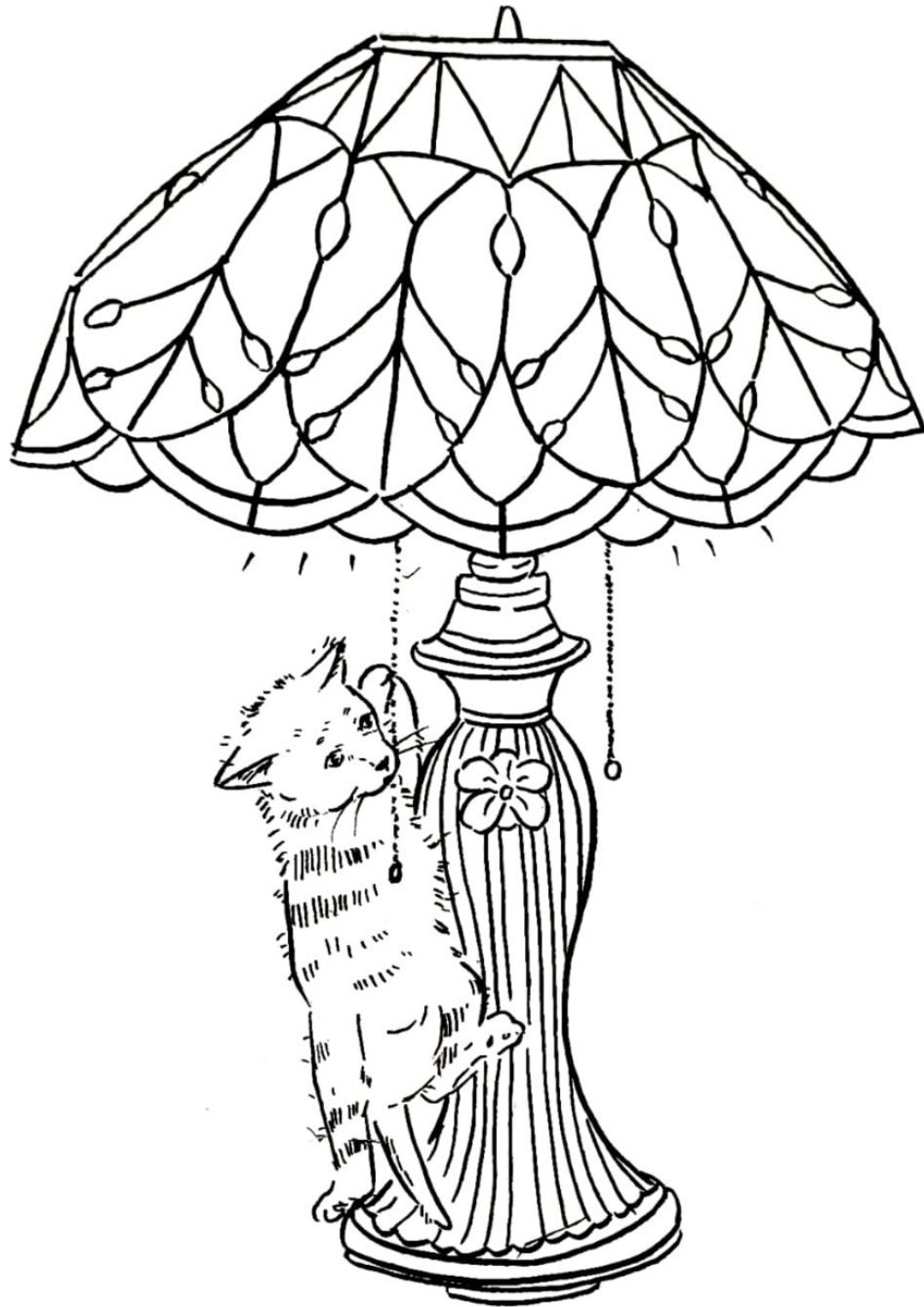
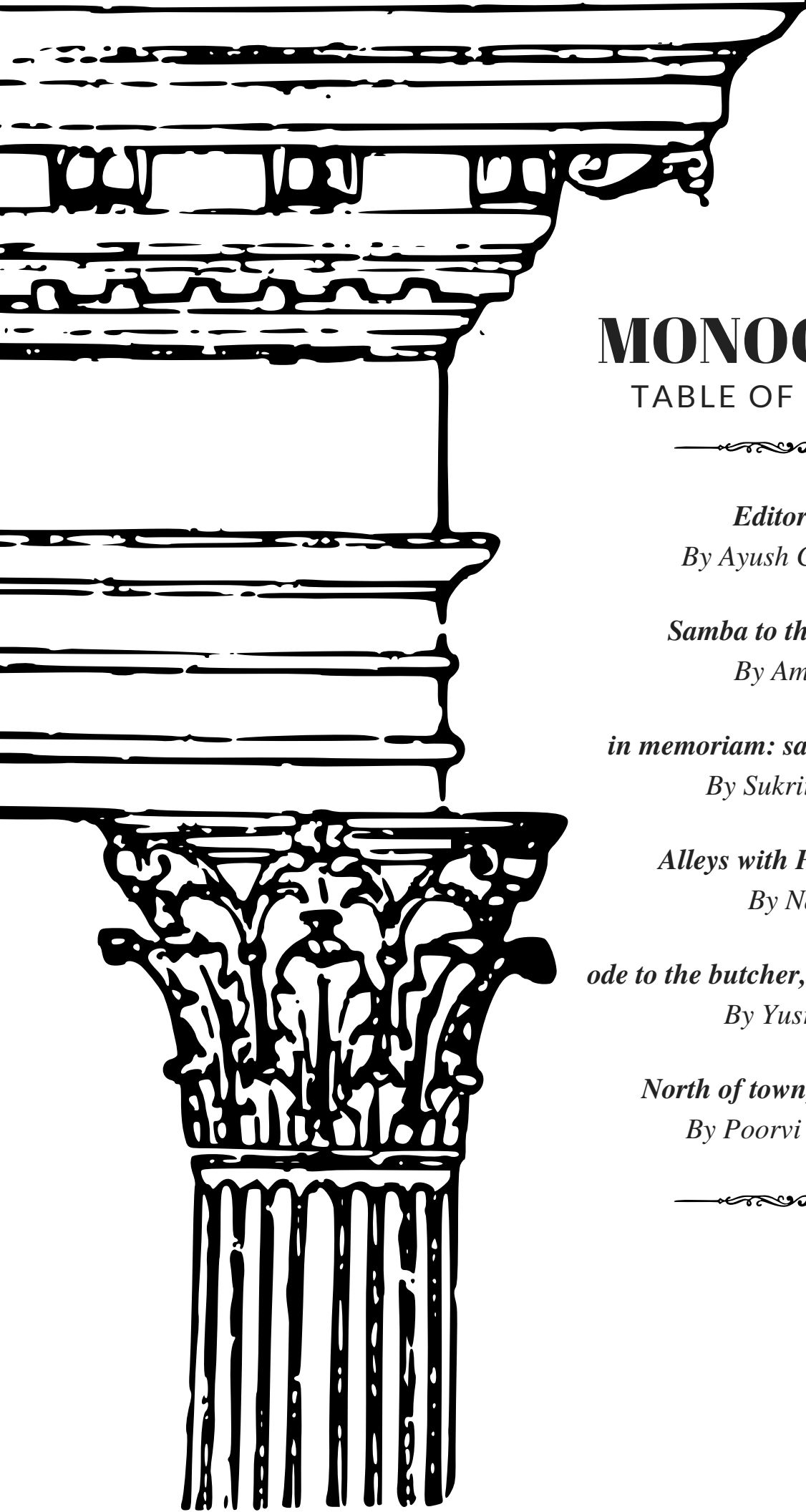


MONOGRAPH

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MONOGRAPH

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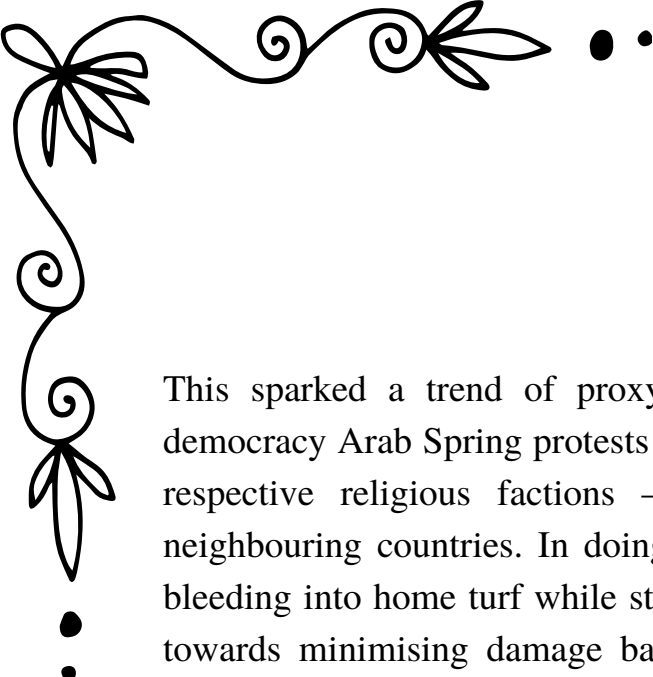
Editor's Note



West Asia is observing a geopolitical shift that seeks to stabilise the region from internal conflicts while trying to reduce US dependency. And this comes down to two key players — Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The two nations have been in conflict with each other for generations but they have never actually declared war. They have fought proxy wars in other countries in the region, like Yemen, Iraq, and Tunisia. Their hand in these conflicts has sustained instability throughout the larger West Asian region and is nothing short of a cold war. Shia majority Iran would finance Shia groups in these conflicts while Saudi Arabia backed those belonging to the Sunni faction. This factional divide is however a small part of the bigger picture — Shias and Sunnis have historically lived in relative harmony. Growth in sectarianism not only stems from American influence in the region but also Saudi Arabia and Iran using the divide to further their own ambitions.

Since the House of al-Saud conquered the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia declared itself as the custodians of the Islam world — two of the holiest sites, Mecca and Medina, are present here. After the 1979 Iranian Revolution which placed Ayatollah Khomeini as the first Supreme Leader of Iran, he claimed that his popular revolution made Iran the legitimate Muslim state. Iran was further opposed to Saudi's monarchy, and the latter feared that the revolution might influence their people to rise against them. A proxy conflict was only a matter of time and it came with the Iraqi invasion of Iran, where Saudi Arabia supported and sustained Saddam Hussein's war machine.



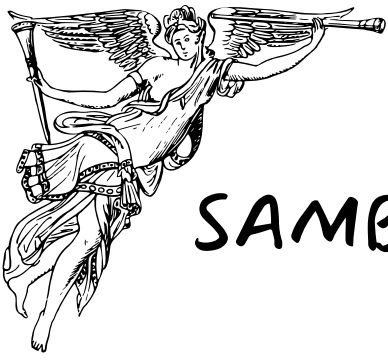
This sparked a trend of proxy warfare that continued during the chain of pro-democracy Arab Spring protests in the region. Iran and Saudi Arabia would back their respective religious factions — through military and financial supplies — in neighbouring countries. In doing so, they were able to keep the conflict away from bleeding into home turf while still managing to gain ground in their war. On the path towards minimising damage back home, Saudi Arabia and Iran contributed to the rampant destabilisation of West Asia as a whole.

After having broken diplomatic ties almost 8 years ago, the two nations signed a rapprochement treaty last year to re-establish relations and to ensure ‘mutual assurances of zero sabotage’. Since then, they have exchanged ambassadors, reopened embassies, and have taken the first steps towards normalisation of the greater West Asian relations. In late December last year, Saudi-backed Yemeni government and Iran-backed Houthi movement announced their commitment towards achieving a ceasefire in the region. Prior to Syria’s re-admission into the Arab League, the Saudi Foreign Minister and the Iranian President both paid separate visits to the country in order to normalise relations. As tensions between Arab nations and Israel worsen however, Iran’s belligerent policy towards the conflict is a cause for concern with regards to the treaty.

While the Houthi groups target cargo vessels in the Red Sea, the Hezbollah — also aligned with Iran — continues to launch attacks on Israeli soldiers on the northern front, adding on to regional instability. In contrast, the Saudi approach is characterised by diplomatic engagement through which they attempt to seek complete ceasefire. The path for normalisation is an on-and-off process as the conflict escalates but the Saudis state that they are committed towards achieving a two-state solution.

Ayush Chakraborty
Senior Editor





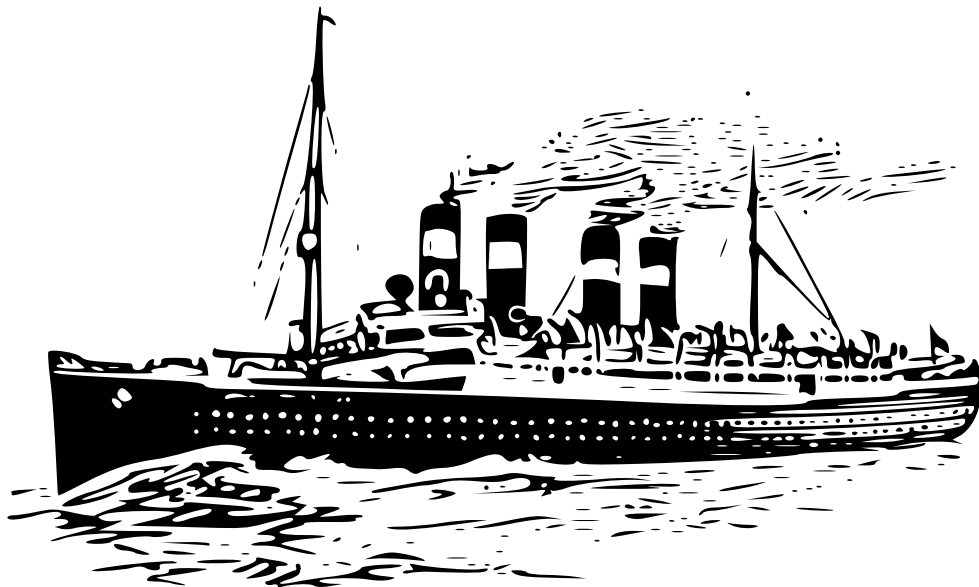
SAMBA TO THE RECKONING



AMIT SHAH

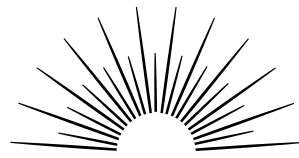
“While I thought that I was learning how to live, I have been learning how to die.” ~ Leonardo da Vinci

He’s a month away from his 22nd birthday. He stands, perhaps, at the railing of a lower deck of the P&O Steamship Company’s SS Mooltan, overlooking the harbor at Bombay, with seagulls screeching in formation above. The evening air is slightly smoke-tinged, still warm from the daytime August heat. It’s August 18, 1939, and my father is about to set sail for the Tilbury Docks in the Port of London, where the P&O liners from Asia docked. In less than a month, Europe would be enflamed when the Second World War was declared on September 1, 1939.



I was his age, little younger, a month before my 21st birthday when I landed in New York in 1971. Until recently this didn't occur to me. I have been thinking about the young man looking westward in 1939 and what he might have thought his life was going to sprinkle in front of him.

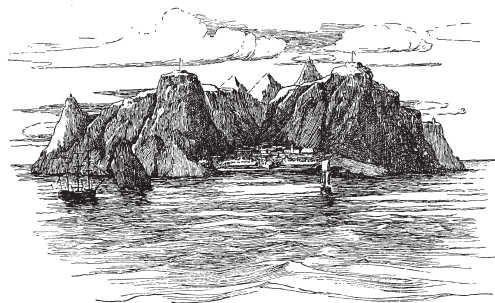
Of course, that life, that gaze westward, is braided with my life. Perseverance, risk-taking, generosity, caring for those less fortunate, and the impairments and the kinks, and the shame, and the consequences. We are more alike than not, perhaps, after all. Before I become cosmic dust like him, I want to share what I never did with him and much that will be news to my own sons.

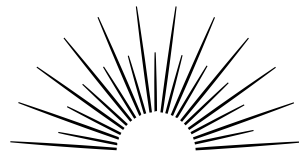


Etched By Light 1

I'm four, a year before I entered kindergarten. My sister, who was four years older than me was already in an elementary grade and learning maths, which I mistook for mats, some weaving for which I too was destined.

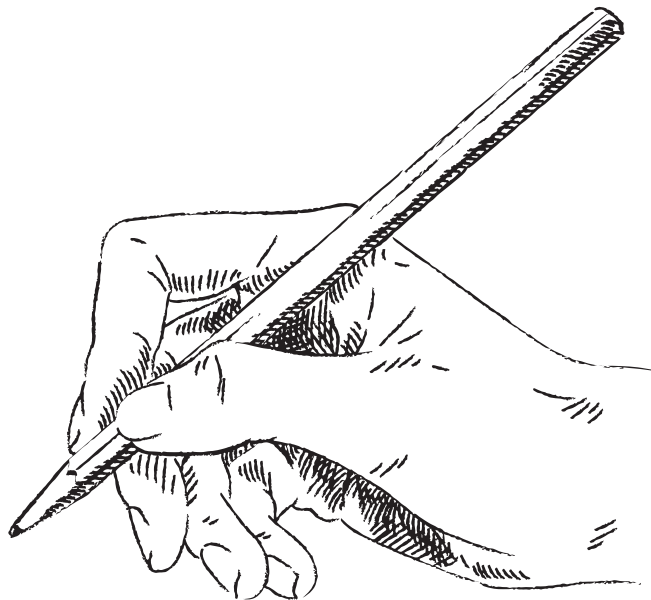
But that's not the story I wanted to tell you. I had learned to read. My mother was my teacher. I could read silently. The downside to that was that she didn't hear me mispronounce words. So, one day I was very excitedly telling her about is (ees) lands, not knowing that the s was silent. Boy, was I embarrassed. Four years old and mistaking a word in a foreign language and I was embarrassed. That set the tone for the rest of my life!

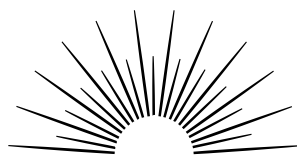




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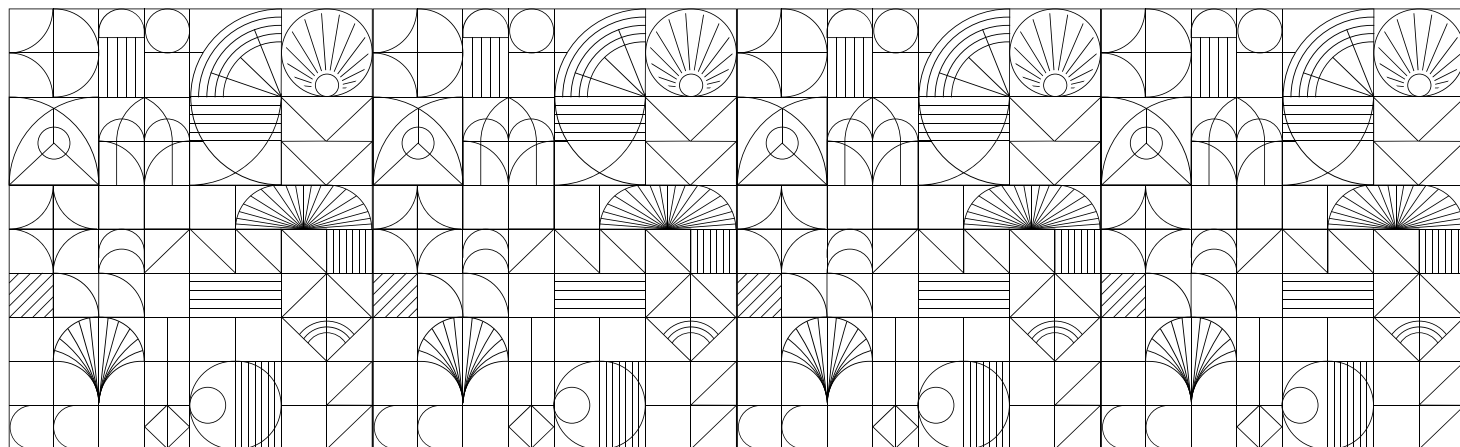
I'm six or seven, in what was known as KG III or kindergarten third year. The following year, at age eight, I started Form 1 or elementary school and remained in the same two buildings till I graduated from high school at almost age seventeen. There was a practice in KG III --- we traded things. A water coloring set for a spinning top, some marbles for a red pencil, that sort of thing. I traded a set of colored pencils (no recollection of how many except they came in a box and were considered "expensive") for an eraser, whose dimensions have vanished from my memory. What has remained is the reaction of my father on hearing about the trade. I happened to use the term "rubber" instead of "eraser." There ensued much consternation and raised voices between my parents for a period of time and it was on my use of the term, which my father seemed to consider to be apocalyptic. It took me many years to understand the slang word I'd used. Neither of my parents tried to explain any of this to me. I came away thinking the lesson was that I was a bad trader and shouldn't try anymore.

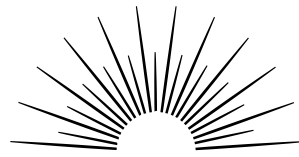




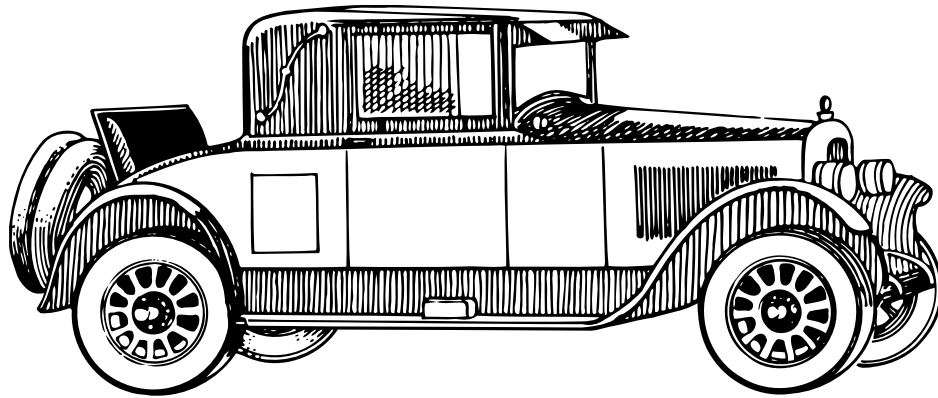
Etched By Light 3

A few years later, on my father's birthday, I bought a paperback biography of the actor Errol Flynn, with my own pocket money, as a present. I was very pleased with myself. My parents went to the movies every Saturday night and a lot of what they saw were Hollywood films in Calcutta's Art Deco cinema halls ---the Metro, New Empire, The Lighthouse, Elite, Tiger, Regal, Minerva. So, a biography of Errol Flynn made perfect sense to me. When I gave my father his present, and he'd opened it, he was somewhat thin-lipped and glum-faced. There was no effusion of hugs and happiness. Being naturally wary and scared of my father's volatile personality, I beat a retreat. Days passed and there was no further mention of the present. Finally, I asked my mother what the matter was. What had I done wrong? I don't remember the words she used but the message was that my father was angry that I'd given him a book about a well-known philanderer, drug abuser and all kinds of gossip about voyeurism in the Hollywood tabloids. None of this was spelled out to me. I simply was told that he was angry that I'd thought he'd like a book about someone as dodgy as Flynn. I wrote a note of apology to my father about a wrong I couldn't understand at the time. Years later, I realized that inadvertently I'd shoved the door to his mirrored life slightly ajar.

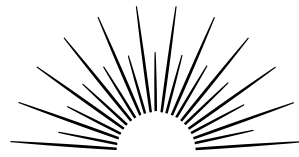




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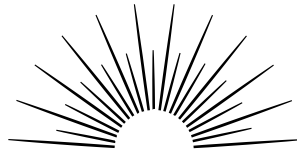
Driving a car in the India of the late '50s and '60s was a dream of almost every kid I knew in my class. A few immensely lucky ones were even allowed to sit in the driver's seat when they were thirteen or fourteen and actually steer a car on empty village roads while a "driver" (read chauffeur) sat nervously in the passenger's seat. My father loved cars but letting me drive as a young teenager was not something he even dreamt of. I, however, had a plan. Once, when he was out of town, I cajoled my mom to give me the keys and said that I would only play with the gears while the car was stationary. All was going well when I hit the clutch and the gear slipped into position ----the wrong position--- and hiccupped forward and the fenders accordioned against the garage's brick wall. How I kept my head from exploding is still a mystery. One of my cousins, much older than me, who spent a lot of time at our house and hung out with my sister, knew of a body-shop fellow. My mother must have paid for it because I certainly didn't, and the front-end damage was fixed. Unfortunately, I didn't learn the hard lesson---that I had to get myself out of jams that I got into.



Etched By Light 5

Hazing, what was termed “ragging” in India in the late 1960s, was deemed to be a privilege at the university where I landed at seventeen. I hear that now “ragging” is officially not allowed. Perhaps like naked discrimination of Dalits, Muslims, and other minorities? In an Orwellian world, hazing was the price of entrance into whatever exclusive clusters we thought was our destiny. At that time, there were a number of colleges making up the university. Crossing into another’s campus to “rag” a “fresher” was not part of the code, though breached at times, especially for the college that was literally across the road from mine. Those first thirty to sixty days were nerve-wracking as myths and legends abounded. One evening, some fellows who were seniors in my college, grabbed me from my room and said that a “dada” (big man) from a neighboring college wanted to see me. I’d heard the whispered tales of this fellow’s brutality during ragging. Knowing there wasn’t a way out, and being terrified, as I was dragged to a dark corner of the building and the lawn, ostensibly to meet the dada, I let out a banshee-like scream and didn’t stop till I was released from their grips. Not only were they startled but their planned prank (as there was no “dada” lurking in the shadows) had completely evaporated.





Etched By Light 6

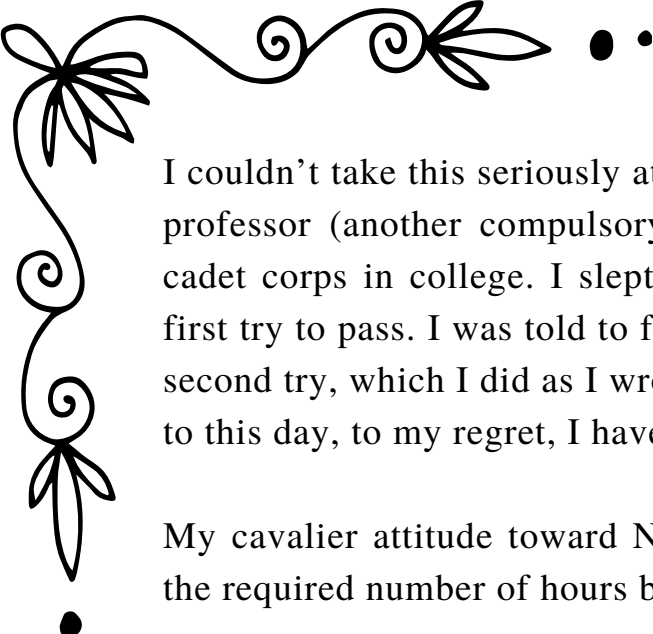
The National Cadet Corps (NCC) was formed in 1948 as the youth cadre of the Indian army. Young people, high school, and university students, were trained (the term is a loose one and depended on the institution and the location during my college days) in marching, drilling, firearms weapons training (that's a grandiose term for my day, when World War I Enfield rifles were used).

When I entered the university in 1967, NCC training was compulsory for a selected number of hours before graduation. To my astonishment, in 1965, the NCC groups were the second line of defense in the Indo-Pakistan war of that year.

We were issued two sets of shirts, trousers, boots, belt, and a beret. The shirts were too tight, the trousers reached just above my ankles. The spiffiest uniforms belonged to the Navy and the air force cadets



(Photo courtesy of Author. Author is on far left)



I couldn't take this seriously at all. This was a bureaucratic joke to me. My Hindi professor (another compulsory subject for graduation) was the director of the cadet corps in college. I slept through his early morning classes and failed my first try to pass. I was told to fill the blue exam notebook with Hindi script in my second try, which I did as I wrote about seeing the Taj by moonlight. I passed but to this day, to my regret, I have to use subtitling to watch Hindi movies.

My cavalier attitude toward NCC drilling did catch up with me. I was short of the required number of hours before my final-year graduation.

Today's NCC, from what I see on social media, is the pride of India's large defense forces with precision marching and men and women in smart uniforms. Especially on 26th of January, Republic Day, which celebrates the establishment of the Indian Constitution and the country's transition to a republic in 1950. The parade on that day in Delhi is a spectacle to witness.

My reprieve came in the form of a one-time offer. I could wipe out the remaining hours needed for "training" if I volunteered for "crowd-control" at the Republic Day parade. YES! What could be easier?

Except it was Delhi in the winter, when the fog and chill can be 43 degrees Fahrenheit, a bone-chilling freeze in a place with no heating. But I was nineteen and it was an adventure. I boarded a covered military truck with a group of ragtag recruits at 3 a.m. in the morning from the north campus of the university and were disgorged near the spectacular boulevards of central Delhi. I have no recollection of controlling any crowds except to pull metal and wooden barriers this way and that. I kept thinking then that I must remember this. Being at the Republic Day parade for free. Now I have.

Over the span of my life, I've read hundreds, thousands, of books. Words that inspired. Words that gave hope; words that taught me a bit more about the universe; words that made me joyful, aroused, unsettled, sorrowful, curious, expectant. Words I dismissed as not worth remembering are some of the words that give me comfort today. Words from Didi, from Ma, from Baba.





IN MEMORIAM: SANDMAN BREATHING



SUKRITI CHAWLA

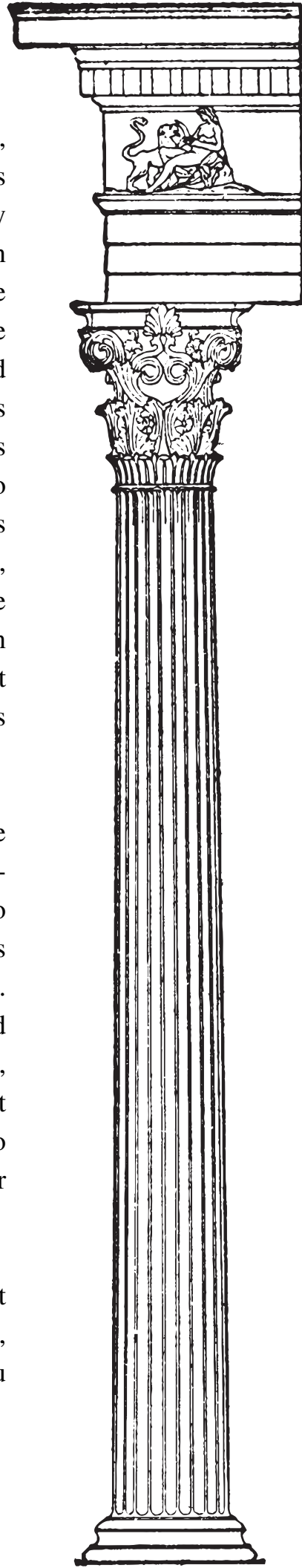
two bodies, turned toward each other: this is a familiar image, you have known this. you have known a shared bed, too-crowded, sometimes wrongly-fit, warm. you have known what it is to sleep next to someone, but you cannot decide if you miss it. there is this film i've watched too many times in too many places. it asks, like many have before, is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all? ne regrettez pas. souvenez-vous. do you choose the memory, or the person? what a stupid question.

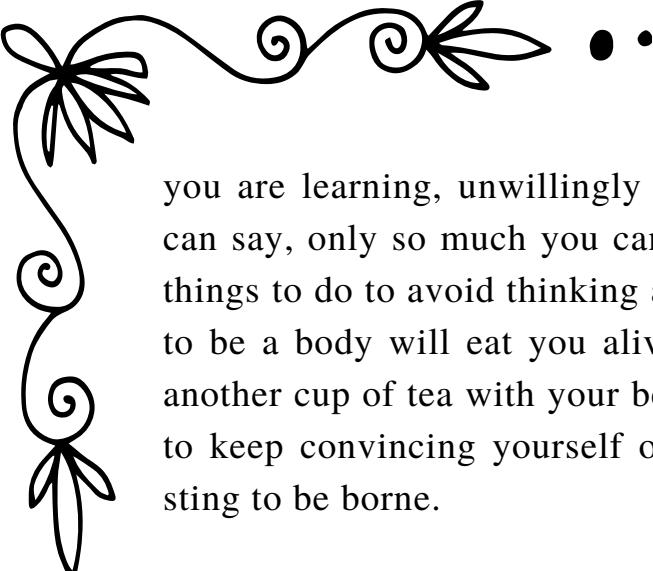
you have known a shared bed, and you have lived days where time wouldn't sit right unless it was them that it wove around. you have spent nights, you have written words, you have been promised and you have been left. you have screamed and cried and walked away. do you remember? you are not sure if you can mark the moment when this deluge of loving moved into your body, if you can point at something in your flesh and say, "see, look here- this is my father standing in the then-big balcony of our drawing room. this is the silhouette of my mother's head cradled in her hands. this is where i learnt, here's how i run." one told you of a world on screen which has settled now into your bones and shadows. it has the hesitant stickiness of a spoon you've just used to stir your tea. it is not his, but it is not without him either. you love it, you try to make sense of what you called loving him.

there is a way in which every time you love — object, creature, calamity — something changes about how the world has arranged itself. you have earrings tucked away, dupattas you try to wear, pendants that you cannot bring yourself to look at even if your friend says your neck looks too bare and nothing else goes. you write about how the shouting of the house has become an unfamiliar silence, no longer amenable to being puzzled together into cold. you are requested to change things and ways and states of being, but you keep asking, with the clueless insistence of a three year-old, “how?” the frustrating inability to answer buys toys and colours to pat your head. this film, it has been through loves and ignored flings and files. classrooms, bedrooms, wine. it's somehow the easiest and the most horrible thing in the world for you to watch. are you living (loving) in wishfulness or in denial? hello, did you say aloud the dread that grows big and fat inside you every day, today? stop that, this isn't appetising.

one of the screened phantoms say that it is a poet's choice (selfish, a little narcissistic in its romanticism, in the wish-fulfilment of its impulsive desire) to remember — to look, to frame, to devour, for a moment — rather than to have. to have is to take the unknown after its horror and kiss it on the forehead. the deferred is a haunting and a home. your highschool boyfriend told you that you didn't know what life was. that, sometimes, things just happen. it took all your misshapen politeness to not yell at him. he wasn't wrong, but you've learnt not to think too long of his voice or smell or song, so you should not consider this too well.

you try a bite of pettiness and you think you've figured out “how,” but it's mostly just stupid and brief. anger is easy, sometimes. things have continued happening, yes. they leave you itchy and jumpy and frustrated. achy and quiet and absent.



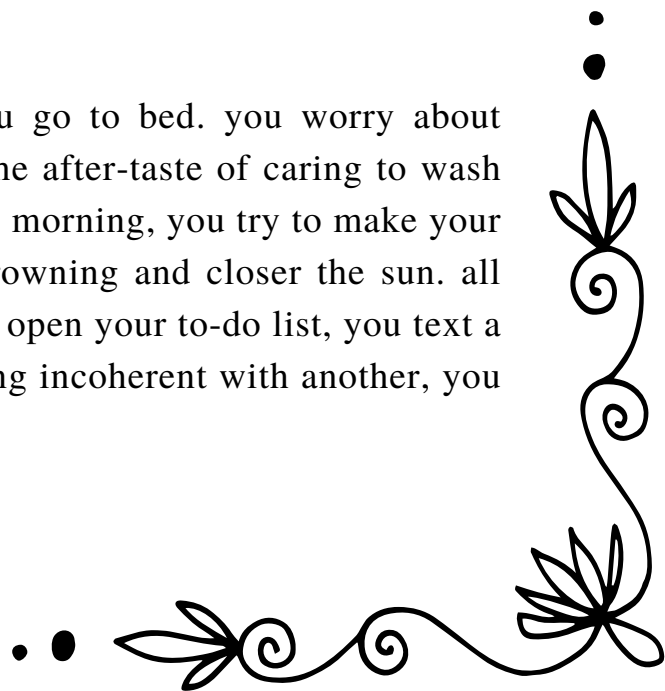


you are learning, unwillingly and painstakingly, that there's only so much you can say, only so much you can (and would perhaps bother to) hold, and endless things to do to avoid thinking about it all. you are learning that to live is terrible, to be a body will eat you alive, and yet you might do it all again just to have another cup of tea with your best friend, soon. you are learning that it is difficult to keep convincing yourself of that. anger is lonely, and yet, it is the prettiest sting to be borne.

there is so much lack in wanting: that shared bed, you have hated it— too warm and too wrong and too small and too big. but you cannot seem to bring yourself to sleep nowadays, so, sometimes, you wish you could have it again. you have hated so many things, and yet, the appeal of the not-quite-unbearable-yet is tempting. the promise (lie) of rest is the most cruel of them all. you joke with your friends about how you'd probably be better off in unhappy marriages, buried in work, always drinking more than enough wine in a kitchen of your own. how the order, the instruction, the playbook/-bill, seems infinitely more bearable against the horror of deciding what to do with yourself. what to eat, where to live, who to love, when to leave, whether to remember.

to break under the tired of your body is a spectacle. which is to say, it is horrifying and delightful and it wreaks a havoc you cannot name. you don't have much time for sorting through oranges and eggs and cakes when it feels like your bones will come undone if you stay awake a moment longer. you don't have time to miss houses and dogs and the way he smelled. you don't have time to give in to remembering again, it owes you life.

you make a to-do list, you set your alarms, you go to bed. you worry about waking up, and about something scary. there is the after-taste of caring to wash out. it's alright, you'll dust the shelves soon. in the morning, you try to make your body speak some sense, something less like a drowning and closer the sun. all skin and smell. you remember. you try not to. you open your to-do list, you text a friend you miss them, you spend half an hour being incoherent with another, you do your work. you hope you can sleep that night.





ALLEYS WITH PEEPING ROOTS

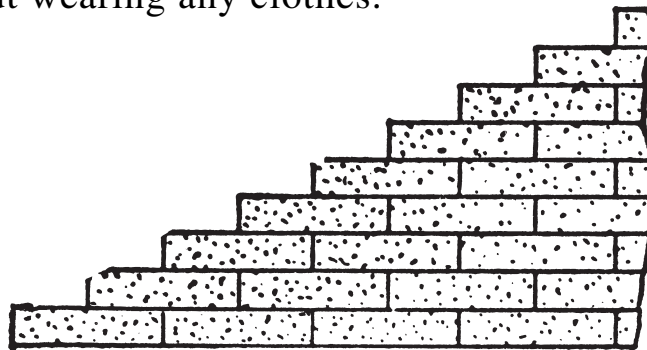


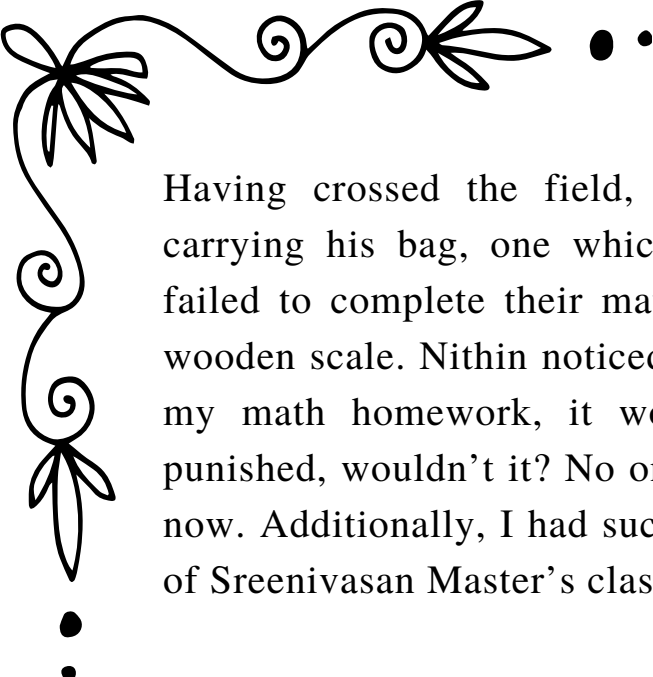
NANDAN

I made sure to double-check my math homework before leaving the house. Why subject myself to a beating from Sreenivasan Master otherwise?

I jumped over the ridge and landed in Ajayettan's compound after navigating through the narrow alley. During the construction of my house, my uncle had once attempted this same jump at the ridge. He'd ended up dislocating his knee, leaving him laid up for a long time.

Although the actual route is through the panchayat road, it entails a significant amount of walking. If you take this way, however, you reach home much quicker. Ajayettan's house only has its foundation built so far, and it's been a considerable amount of time since then without any further progress. As a result, the house is now covered in a variety of plants, resembling a forest. Adjacent to Ajayettan's compound, there's another unfinished house. Since its walls are yet to be painted, the house appears to be standing without wearing any clothes.





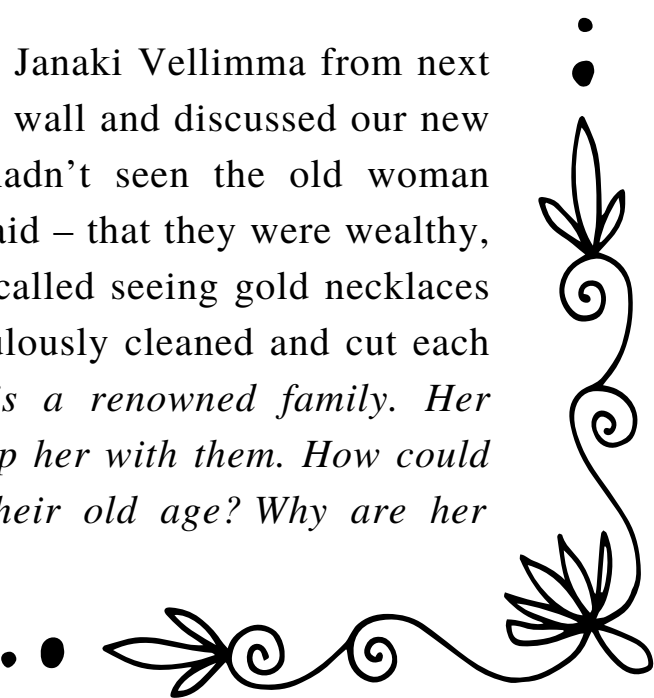
Having crossed the field, I reached Nithin's house, and he emerged, carrying his bag, one which resembles a sack. In school, students who failed to complete their math homework were struck on the hand with a wooden scale. Nithin noticed Abhirami watching me. If I hadn't completed my math homework, it would be entertaining for her to see me get punished, wouldn't it? No one could find joy in witnessing my punishment now. Additionally, I had successfully answered a question asked at the end of Sreenivasan Master's class.

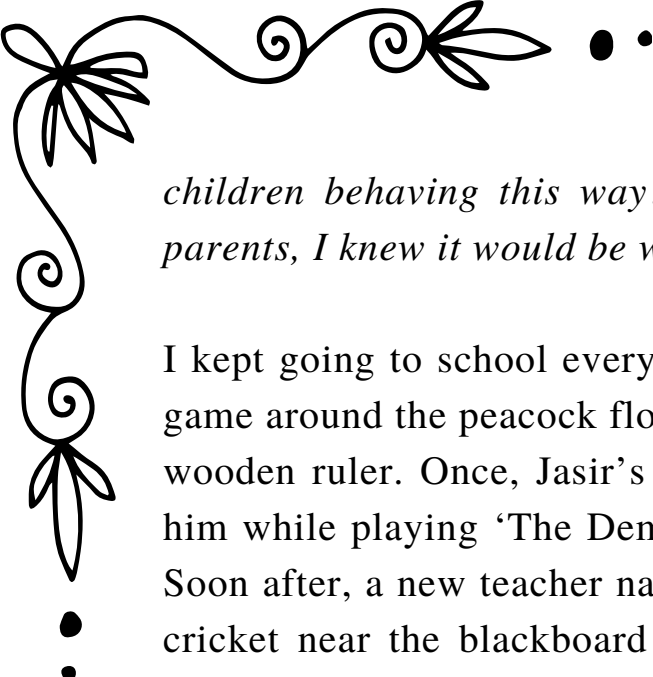
When we returned in the evening, Nithin and I engaged in our usual lengthy conversation near his house. There's a spacious shaded area on the pathway where we talked. Surrounding us were roots of different trees twisting above the ground. Later, when Nithin had left and I was walking alone, I recalled Korettan mentioning that the place was known to have snakes. Strangely, the snakes never emerged when the two of us were engaged in conversation.

While walking and reflecting on many things, I sensed someone moving inside the unfinished house. I glimpsed a figure near the window.

It was the next day when the resident was properly seen. The woman appeared to be above seventy years old, dressed in a dull lungi and blouse.

In the evening, as my mother was cutting fish, Janaki Vellimma from next door leaned against their side of the compound wall and discussed our new neighbour, Narayani Amma. Although she hadn't seen the old woman directly, she knew – from what Korettan had said – that they were wealthy, owning a lot of money and property. I also recalled seeing gold necklaces adorning their necks. While my mother meticulously cleaned and cut each mackerel, she listened with interest. *Hers is a renowned family. Her children seem reluctant to care for her or keep her with them. How could someone live alone in such a grand house in their old age? Why are her*



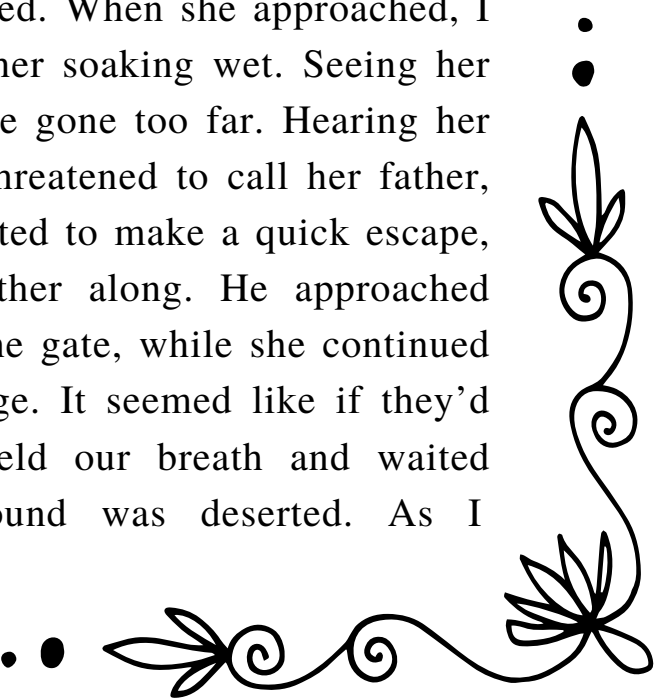


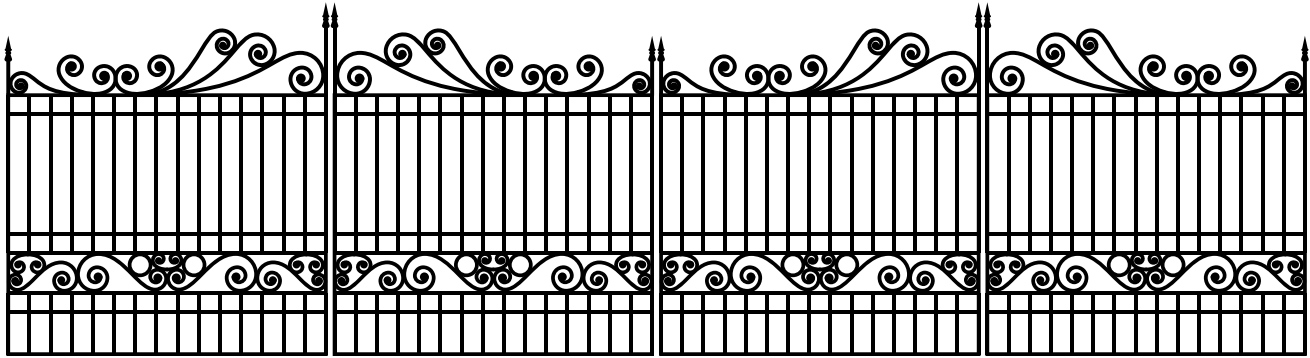
children behaving this way? Even if I ever felt the urge to abandon my parents, I knew it would be wrong to do so.

I kept going to school every day. Some days, we played the touch-and-run game around the peacock flower trees. Occasionally, I'd get beaten with the wooden ruler. Once, Jasir's glasses broke into two pieces when I grabbed him while playing 'The Demon Protecting the Treasure', and he screamed. Soon after, a new teacher named Rosie arrived at the school. We all played cricket near the blackboard tree behind the stage. In class, I managed to escape unharmed because I always made an effort to do my math homework. However, I couldn't understand why Sreenivasan Master would sometimes put his hand in my trouser pocket and squeeze.

On most days, after conversing with Nithin and walking home, Narayani Vellimma could be seen cutting and laying coconut leaves to dry, attending to all the work alone. Old age brings such suffering. And the village is now full of thieves. What would happen if a thief were to enter the house at night?

One day, during the afternoon interval, Abhirami spilled water from her water bottle onto my shirt and burst out laughing with her friend. I filled a bottle of water and waited until the classes were over. As soon as the bell rang, I took the bottle and hid by the woodshed. When she approached, I poured out all the water with force, leaving her soaking wet. Seeing her standing there drenched, I realized I may have gone too far. Hearing her cry, an autorickshaw driver near the school threatened to call her father, who owns a shop nearby. Nithin and I attempted to make a quick escape, but the autorickshaw driver brought her father along. He approached Sreenivasan Master, who was standing near the gate, while she continued crying. Nithin and I retreated behind the stage. It seemed like if they'd caught us, they would eat us alive. We held our breath and waited anxiously until everyone left and the ground was deserted. As I





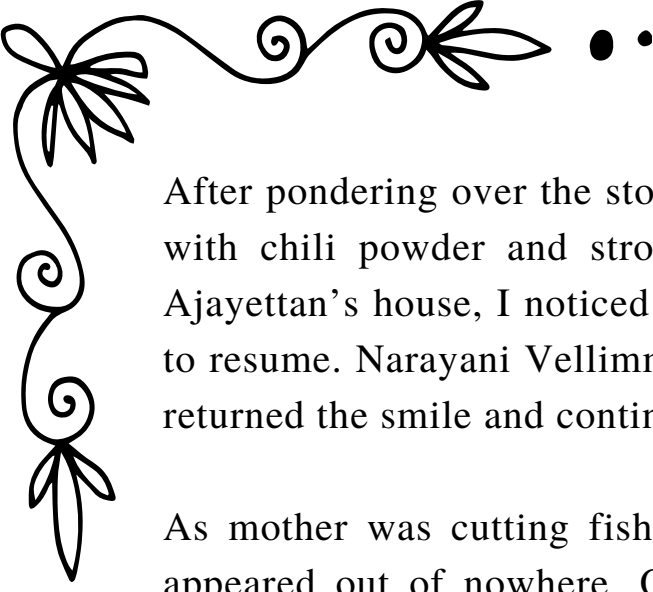
contemplated facing Sreenivasan Master the next morning, I was the one standing there drenched and shivering.

We walked silently all the way, showing no interest in our surroundings, until we finally reached Nithin's house. There, we stood face to face without exchanging any words, unlike our usual interactions. I didn't speak to anyone at home, and I had no appetite for supper. Even when I lay down, the fear persisted like a constant ache in my chest. I couldn't sleep at all. Whenever I closed my eyes, I saw snakes crawling among the roots in the darkness. I spent the night counting my breaths until dawn broke.

My good luck! Today, there is a teachers' strike, so no school – a relief. Glancing at the calendar, I noticed the next two days marked in red ink: Mahanavami and Vijayadashami. I won't have to go to school until three days from now.

However, upon my return, I won't receive such a warm reception. Everything will be over if my mother and father find out somehow. Once again, at night, I opened my eyes, looked up, and waited for sleep to come.

I sat in Sreenivasan Master's class feeling like a thief, expecting him to grab my ear at any moment. It didn't happen. It seemed like Abhirami was ready to remind him, but that didn't occur either. As usual, the long bell rang. While leaving school in the evening, Abhirami turned and looked at me, even appearing to smile a little. I didn't pay any attention.

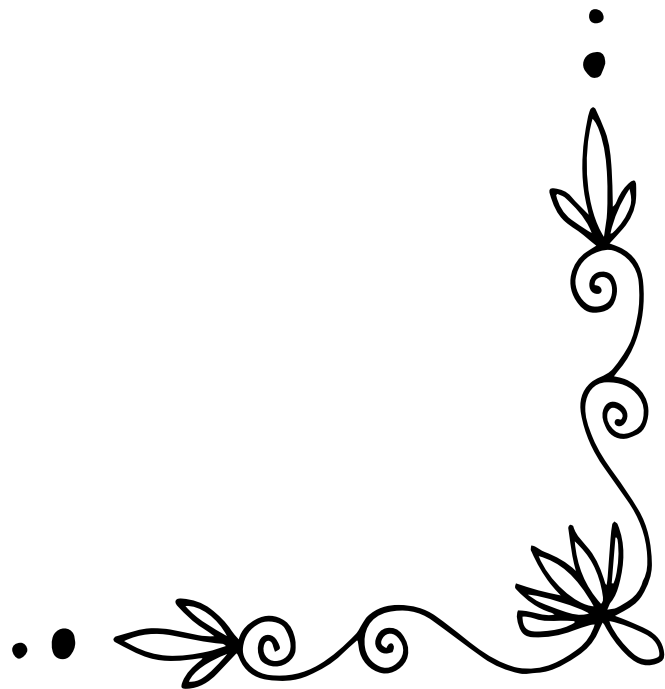


After pondering over the story of the escape, I indulged in a pear sprinkled with chili powder and strolled home, savouring the breeze. Passing by Ajayettan's house, I noticed that the forest floor had been cleared for work to resume. Narayani Vellimma smiled gently at me as she dried the cloth. I returned the smile and continued on my way.

As mother was cutting fish, I sat calmly with the striped cat which had appeared out of nowhere. On that day, Janaki Vellimma enthusiastically began recounting another story. The incident that Korettan had informed her about involved Narayani Vellimma, who allegedly killed her daughter-in-law by striking her on the head with a pestle. All the cases against her were resolved illicitly. They both concluded that it wasn't too surprising for her to be alone.

This was the topic of discussion between my father and mother that night as we enjoyed rice with Tilapia curry. My father even made a joke about her. Meanwhile, I struggled to remove a thorn stuck between my teeth.

The following day, upon returning from my school routine, the old woman smiled and displayed familiarity once more. Perhaps her pestle was still stored there? Who knows. Regardless, I didn't bother to pass by that way again. If you take the panchayat road, you simply need to make a slight detour. It's not that difficult, is it?





ODE TO THE BUTCHER, THE TANGERINE KING



YUSRA BASIT

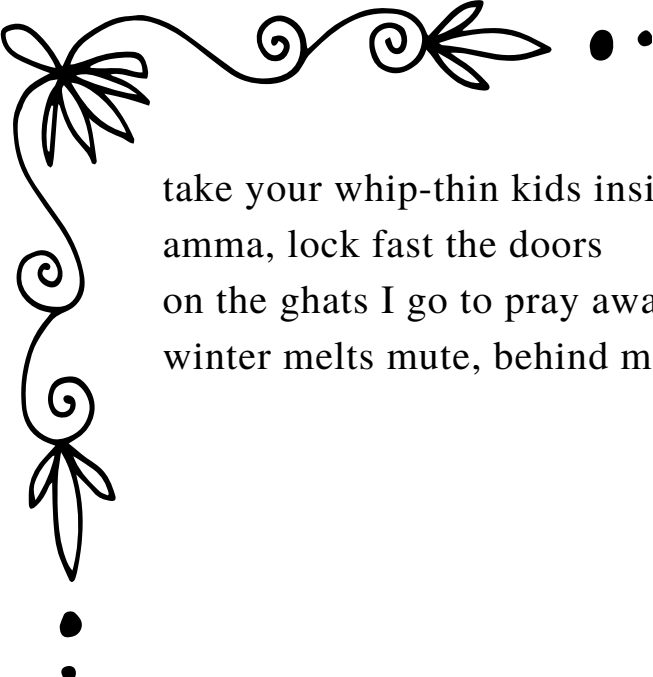
o child of the weaver
go weep in vain
night comes swift on the star
when the sleeping butcher wakes

now my flesh is a trench, made battlefield
jaana, dry your eyes
in the husks of lolling silkworm tongues
you must dig your cold dinner

o son of the soil
muster your last breath
he buries you whole and living
to cure and spend your spotted hide

his boning knife carves true
the jugular in play, folds coy
shehzada, he limps to his pious never-land
the promised king of the tangerine

o daughter of the miner
stitch your mouth fast
his bull is weaned on blood-frenzy
while glorious master lusts for ripe feasts



take your whip-thin kids inside
amma, lock fast the doors
on the ghats I go to pray away a storm
winter melts mute, behind me, to his ire

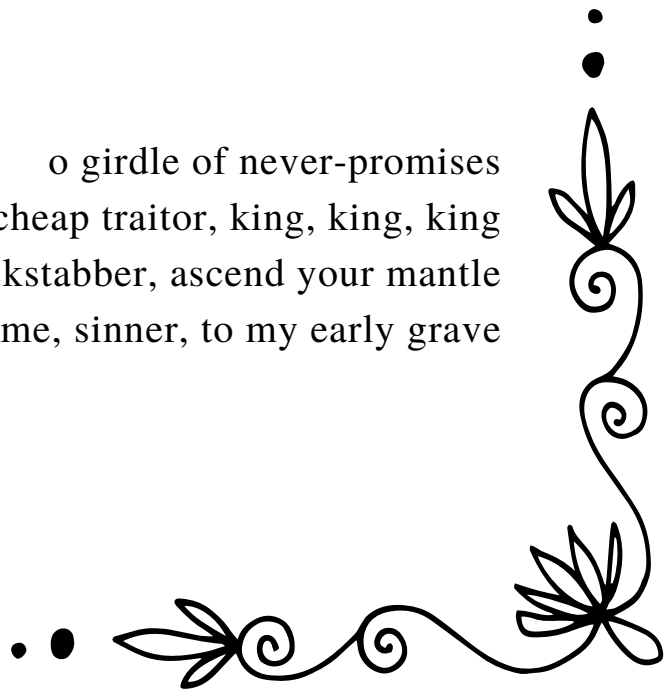
o child of the kingdom
cut off your seeking limbs
his hounds are cut loose
and your vile scent maddens

the dust retches his murderous, loathsome name
to a march of cloven thunder, wide throats
maryam, bathe your wailing infant
his royal cavalry waits by the pyre

o offspring of hate
your end comes upon the wave
martyr of the morning, arise
this too, i say, shall pass into flame

he makes me another with his pen and sword
my father's ledger lies gnashed in his teeth
dozakh, your warmth beckons slow
my humble dowry mere fat cuts of meat

o girdle of never-promises
blind fool, cheap traitor, king, king, king
deceiver, liar, backstabber, ascend your mantle
come sing me, sinner, to my early grave





NORTH OF TOWN, THERE IS A HILL



POORVI AMMANAGI

A list of things I inexplicable adore,
Bunch of fresh mint leaves: perfectly pairs both sweet and savory.

Covers of obscure albums, *Bismillah*, a frozen party.
Decadent: both the word and the sauce it might describe.

Electrifying books & stealing them,
For reading them (*in secret*), smelling them (*in public*).

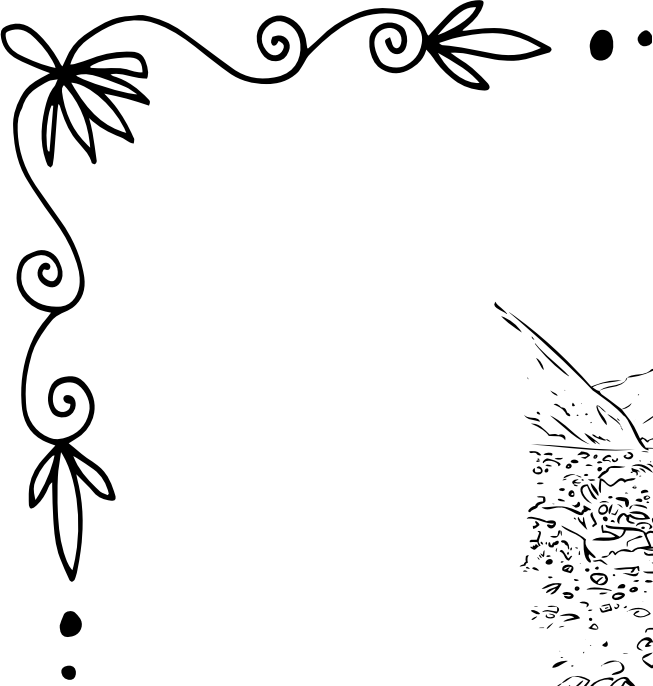
Ghost town, gimples into a future, the one without us.
Honeysuckle growing on archways of old english homes and—
Ivy and rhododendron too, homes of childhood books.

Jupiter and all her 79 moons,

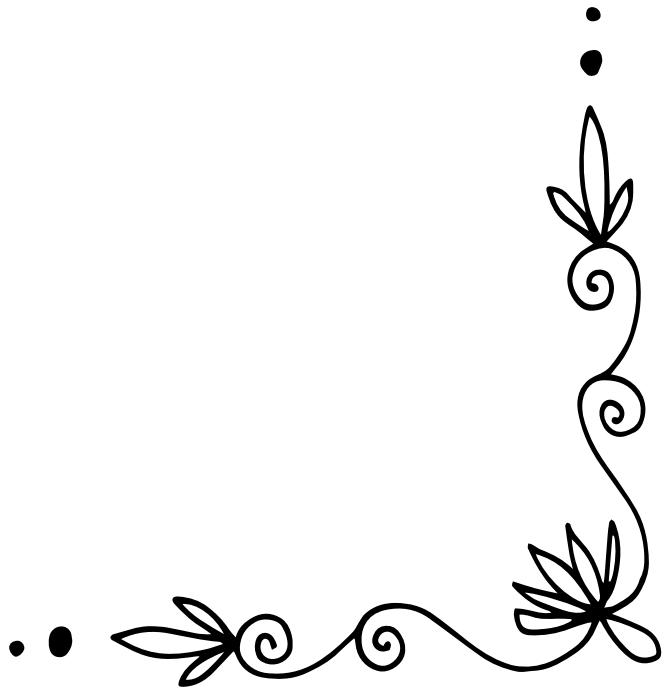
Keeping it honest, is a list even poetry? And also why am I—
Leaving out a map to my heart?
Maybe I wish for you to follow.

North of town, there is a hill,
Over the meadows, there are tamarind trees,
Pack your bags, stuff them with books, steal absinthe—
Quiet! Just meet me there.

Rainy days, warm coffee and mystery novels,
Simple pleasures is all I ask for,
Talk to me about the revolution we could cause,
You and me, just by leaving the mindless cog.



Violently they will chase us, leaving is never easy.
We belong to the order of a society that asks us our bodies,
‘Xcept it's also our soul they want to corrupt.
You know, I refuse to participate, cause even—
Zoo animals should find a way to be free.



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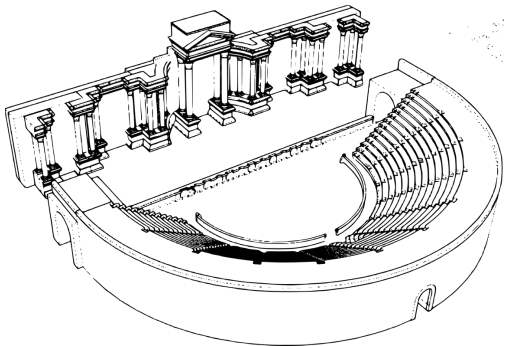
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