

# REFLECTIONS

*October 2021*



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Tell us

What we're doing right and what we're doing wrong and what you think of this issue. We'd love to hear from you.

## From the Editor-in-Chief

**I**t gives me great pleasure to bring to you the year-end Oct 2021 issue of *Reflections*. As we eagerly look forward to the new year and the relationships and challenges it brings us, we should look at the year that went by, how far we've come, and what we've accomplished.

This issue's spotlight stars are Vijaya Harishankar who has been with Newgen almost from its very beginnings and Karan Malhotra, Vice-President—Sales, US Business Development and Sales. Read all about the crazy world of a busy mind in Asha's poem and how very similar we are to the puzzle pieces we see in life by Shruthi. Nandavanam, one of Newgen's CSR projects, is back with an update on the progress of the micro-forest ventures they are actively pursuing. In the travelogue section is Natarajan's article on his trip to Manjolai Estate and Kuthiraivetti. For Tamil lovers, there's an array of articulate and thought-provoking poetry.

And last, but not least, join me in welcoming the newest addition to the *Reflections* Editorial Board, Kalyani Mirajkar, who is a wildlife and nature enthusiast. Read all about her travels, her adorable pets, her interests, and the café she ran before joining the Newgen family.

~ Lydia

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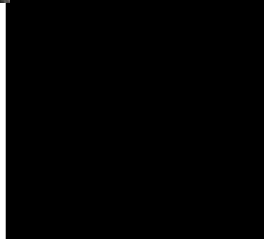
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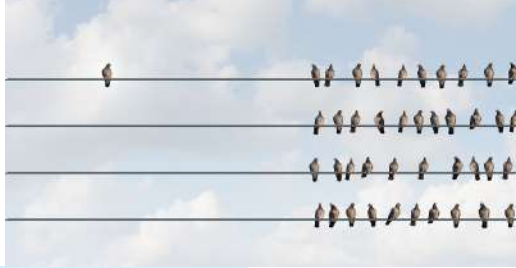
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# Confessions of a busy mind

..... ASHA BHASKAR, *Managing Editor*

Did I send that e-mail I was working on all afternoon?

Did I switch off the gas?

Was it today that the manager called for a meeting?

The school fee is due next week, perhaps?



“Where are my swimming goggles?” my son screams

“You forgot the cheese in the burger,” announces his partner in crime

“There is no attachment as you claim,” says my client

Screeching sounds, fading in and out with time

“You forgot to pay the electricity bills!”

“Your sons and recruits are skipping their tasks!”

“The last report you did was below par!”

“You think the going is beyond the ask!”

When was the last time I looked in the mirror?

The time I cooked for myself, a something sweet and hot

When I stole a nap and travelled afar

To lands that know me not

Don't call out for me, I refuse to hear you

Don't look for me, I decline to show any sign

Give me some minutes to do the nothings that I want

Give me those moments that I have forgotten were mine

I will meet you at the end of the break

A five-minute coffee and a cookie

Don't burn the world down until I'm back

There's lot more to be endured surely!

# Exploring Nainital

..... KALYANI MIRAJKAR, *Copyeditor, Aspen*

As he put his oar into the water and pushed forward, the boatman looked at the descending mist on the lake and said:

Bambai ka fashion, Dilli ka saashan, aur Nainital ka mausam, inka koi bharosa nahi. Kabhi bhi badal jaega.

(The fashion of Mumbai, the government of Delhi and the weather of Nainital cannot be relied upon – it is erratic and can change at a moment’s notice.)



*Lake of Kumaon in Nainital*



*Me on a sunny morn pretending to stretch!*

This is the beauty of Nainital, the great Lake of Kumaon, ruled by the clouds.

The emerald green water of the lake is like the centerpiece of a bejeweled majestic crown. The lake is surrounded by mountains on all sides and the town seems to have just grown and spilled over it except on one side. The southern side of the lake has the Thandi Sarak, a walkway along the lake restricted to motored vehicles. Only a graveled footpath is available for the morning and evening walkers.

The mountain here is known to be treacherous with its share of landslides, although it has been stable for the last few years. The Thandi Sarak starts from the Naina Devi temple and goes all the way past the two temples located here and ends at the gravel path where early morning one can spot kayaking enthusiasts on the lake. A unique feature of Nainital is the fact that the lake comes full circle



and one can take a walk around the entire lake. It is a total of about 3.5 km, and at a leisurely pace, the trip around the lake can be made in an hour. The government works very hard to keep the lake clean and alive as it is home to a number of fish from the mahseer (a type of carp) and trout families.

Visiting the lake is and should be the No. 1 item on any itinerary, be it a boat ride or a pleasant walk along the lake. From Tallital (at the south end) to Mallital (at the north end where the Naina Devi temple is located) is about 1.5 km. Numerous birds such as warblers and redstarts will make their friendly appearance besides the countless



fishes of course. Next to the age-old public library you can also spot a few resident ducks and geese.

After the walk, when hunger and thirst come calling and before heading out for some shopping along the lake, it is best to stop at Sakley's, the Mountain Café. The café offers a wide range of main courses and snacks, but really it is their range of desserts that is worth the climb up the mountain from Mallital's Bank of Baroda ATM (a



*At Sakley's, the Mountain Cafe*

short climb that nonetheless leaves your huffing and puffing). I always gorge on their chocolate truffle, eating one and packing two!

For some street food, try the snacks sold outside the HDFC Bank alongside the lake. There's plenty of soup, chowmein and momos to choose from at the Bhutia Market.

The Bhutia Market is for the discerning visitor. Shop for “authentic fakes” here. If your interests lie in clothes and accessories, then there's definitely something for you in this market. There's a very slim chance of you leaving this place empty-handed.

Typical to any hill station in India, the markets in Nainital offer a crazy mix of products that don't belong here, and yet the latest trends can be spotted here. If you spot the NGO-run Himjoli or Pahari





*Candles shaped like fruit*

extremes, the glorious red and pink blooms can be seen from almost every treetop.

Nainital is also famous for candles, and while I don't know how they've suddenly become the rage here, there is no harm in picking up one or two candles priced typically between 2 and 100 rupees.

My idea of going to the hills, however, is to have some peace and quiet, where you can gaze upon the endless mountains and marvel at their beauty. Time away from the hustle and bustle of the town. If you're like-minded, then head up from Mallital toward the popular horse riding spot at Tiffin Top. Take the right turn just before the toll barricade and go up the narrow tree-lined road. This road leads to the tiny town of Pangot via the even tinier Kilbury. These two places are paradise for those who wish to indulge in a spot of birding. If you are an enthusiast then you would have definitely come with your binoculars and handbooks, and perhaps even a guide. If not, keep

Shop, do stop and take a look. The sweaters available here are handmade by the ladies of the villages around, which are then sold through the central channel of these NGOs. Besides sweaters, one can shop for almond and apricot oils as well as many flavors of pickles and preserves. Try the buransh juice, a drink made from the rhododendron flower. The flowers start to bloom from late January, and on the higher

your ears and eyes wide open and try to hear the tweets and follow where the sounds lead you. You will come across a warbler or a magpie or a forktail. It is all very exciting when you peer through the leaves of the grand old oak and spot the bird creating the racket. You will be amazed at how a bird that tiny can make all that ruckus.

The way up to Pangot also holds a viewpoint from where one can gaze upon the snow peaks of the Trishul Himalayan range. Some folks sit here with massive telescopes and for a price will allow you to view these more closely. I have never done that though. I like the marvel that I can see unaided. From near here, there is a road up which leads to a place called the Snow Viewpoint. As the name suggests, from here one can see the snow peaks, or may I say more appropriately, one can see a peak. Singular. You can take the cable car up to the point as well, which is a novelty for sure. It also offers a bird's-eye view of the lake and one can see the kidney-bean shape clearly etched into the sides of the mountains to form the lake itself. Or you can pull over on the way to Pangot and catch a similar view of the clearly defined view of the lake.

Nainital is popularly visited during the summer when people flock upward in search of cooler climes. The Mall Road does get pretty crowded at that time of the year. Personally I feel there is nothing better than coming here to enjoy the crisp winters, sitting beside the bonfire at the Boat Club at the Mallital corner. Typically it is a members-only club and one needs to fill in a form with ID proof and pay cover charge to enter the premises. Once inside, you are transported to the British era, with wooden floors, walls, and ceilings and pictures from a bygone time adorning the walls. A glowing, cracking fire invites you to sit and have some rum with pakoras and



*Kidney-bean shape of the lake as seen from the top*

then take a walk down the deck against the cold breeze from the lake. It does snow here sometimes when the weather really comes down, usually in early February. The lake does not freeze, but the roads beyond do get snowed in.

Nainital has something to offer everyone. From the honeymooning couples who can go boat paddling in the lake to the vacationing families who have plenty of activities suited for all ages to the nature lovers who find their slice of paradise in the oak and pine forest to the adventure junkies who go parasailing and rappelling. It is indeed a crown jewel in the Kumaon landscape.

# Nandavanam

..... **RAGHU RAM PRASATH B.**, *Project Coordinator at Eco-Tree Project*

## Sholinganallur Plantation: An Update

Our first micro-forest project in Sholinganallur was initiated in January 2021 on a piece of marshland that was left unused as it was



*Sholinganallur Plantation, October 2020*

believed to be unsuitable for any type of plantation/cultivation. When we first visited the site, the land was under 4-foot-deep stagnant water.

We started by draining the water and then filled the land with truckloads of soil. This was followed by planting of saplings, and by the time this was completed on 28 February 2021, a total of 2,000 saplings from 40 different varieties had been planted.



*Sholinganallur Plantation, February 2021*

By August, the saplings had grown over 12 feet. We also spotted two rabbit burrows and multiple bird nests and observed frequent movements of reptiles, including snakes. The artificial pond that we had dug up at the centre of the property has now become home to numerous aquatic



*Sholinganallur Plantation, August 2021*



beings. In the next few years, we hope that this former wasteland will turn into an urban jungle with diverse species of insects, birds and reptiles.

### **New projects taken up by Nandavanam**

#### ***Nammavanam at Puzhuthivakkam***

Following our success in Sholinganallur, we were given a small property in Puzhuthivakkam to create our next micro-forest.



*Nammavanam at Puzhuthivakkam, June 2021*

This site was similarly prepared, and all the required arrangements for plantation were made. Around 7 am, twenty volunteers from CORO Healthcare reached the venue along with a few local volunteers. The plantation was inaugurated by the Regional Deputy Commissioner of



*Nammavanam at Puzhuthivakkam, July 2021*

Adyar Zone, Greater Chennai Corporation. The Zonal Officer, Assistant Engineer, Executive Engineer and a few more officials from the Puzhuthivakkam Zone also participated in the event.

A total of 700 saplings were planted in and around the site. Each sapling was tied to a sturdy log for support and dry grass was used as mulch to help with water retention. Regular watering is being done and periodic maintenance will be carried out for the next 3 years until the plants can survive on their own.



*Nammavanam at Puzhuthivakkam, August 2021*

### ***Nammavanam at Otteri Herbal Park***

Our third micro-forest is being created at Otteri Herbal Park.



*Nammavanam at Otteri Herbal Park, August 2021*

This was inaugurated by the Zone-8 Zonal Officer on 23 August 2021 and here we have planted 600 saplings. We have been receiving continued support from local volunteers as well as the corporation staff. We are planning to plant a second batch of saplings by the first week of October.



*Nammavanan at Otteri Herbal Park, September 2021*



*Nammavanan at Otteri Burial Ground, August 2021*

## *Nammavanam at Otteri Burial Ground*

The next site is the Otteri Burial Ground. This site handed over to us at Otteri is the largest we have worked on with a total area of 1.25 acres.

The project was started on 13 September. The first sapling was planted by the Zonal Officer of Otteri, while the Executive Engineer and Superintendent of Parks joined him.



*Nammavanam at Otteri Burial Ground, September 2021*

So far, we have planted 1,000 saplings at this site and are looking forward to planting another 2,000 saplings in the coming months.

## Spotlight on

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# Vijaya Harishankar

Vijaya Harishankar, Senior Manager, Editorial Services, of the editing team, needs no introduction. Her association with Newgen is as old as Newgen itself! Many an editor has been moulded by her; her natural talent to spot the inconsistent and glaring errors with just a



*Vijaya with her daughter Varsha and husband Hari*



*Vijaya with her family*

We help our clients create, manage, and deliver content, and help their customers find it



*With her family at Horsely Hills, Andhra Pradesh*



*Her children Vijay and Varsha*

multifarious tasks such as editing, collation, index editing, scheduling, budgeting, and more. She has come a long way, and she says, ‘I am proud of the person I am today’. No reason why she should ever want a name change: ‘I love my name and would not change it for any reason.’

Vijaya is a Chennaiite. She hails from East Tambaram, one of the suburbs of Chennai. The greenery is what she loves the most, which adds to the peace and calm of the locality. It provides the right ambience for her to begin her day with yoga and pooja – a practice that adds to her personality. Music inspires her and she is currently learning to play the keyboard.

Although she began her career as a lecturer, she later got into proofreading at Newgen and has stayed on ever since, growing in the

cursory glance has enhanced the quality of the editorial team while tightening the strings on the final QC! It’s a relief to many to know their book/article will be QCed by Vijaya! People know that she will take care! Doesn’t that speak volumes of what she is worth?

Vijaya, as the name in Sanskrit denotes ‘victory,’ has trained many new recruits and has handled



ranks with experience. She has proved her mettle in the face of any crisis or challenge that occasionally grips the production team. Vijaya's cool demeanor and her calm and composed approach on the floor has seen many a problem dissolve and put people at ease. Naturally, it is not surprising that her inspiration is from none other than Prabhakar Ram, who in her own words 'is a cool person'.

Vijaya adores her family and is a happy homemaker as well. While her son has impressed her with his exceptional skills at solving puzzles (the mathematical brain that he probably inherits from her), playing shuttle and fixing bugs in computers, her daughter, whose birth she describes as the happiest moment in her life, is equally gifted.

She has a beautiful handwriting and is independent and self-confident. She also loves cooking for her family and has been experimenting with recipes from YouTube.

She finds her work-life balance by engaging in things that calm her and at the same time are productive: Vijaya relaxes by cleaning her home and listening to SPB's songs. 'I also unwind by watching Super Singer on Vijay TV, and of course I love to play the keyboard', she affirms.

But the one thing that many of us do not know about Vijaya – the strict disciplinarian with an eye for detail, a talent for which Ganesh Bhatt (former head of copyediting) appreciated her – is that she is a very sensitive person. She finds time to say 'Hello' to everyone on the floor, lends her ear to anyone who needs a listen and has a reassuring smile as cool as cool can be. That's the lightness of the person she is and the deep-rootedness of that which she holds within.

## Spotlight on

# Karan Malhotra



*Karan*

Say hello to Karan Malhotra, Vice President—Sales, US Business Development and Sales. Stationed in Folsom, California, Karan enjoys the nice, quiet town: “No traffic woes, easy to get around, and



*Karan with his family*



*At Amritsar*

a good social network,” he remarks, before adding, “but it gets really hot in summers (110°F), and wildfires are always a concern, with the smoke being a big nuisance for about 6–8 weeks.”

Karan is proud of what he has been able to achieve for himself and his family. “I’ve worked very consistently to achieve it,” he says. “My happiest memory is buying my first house in the US (in Rochester Hills, Michigan) in 1998.” The coolest thing he is working on personally: “The ongoing support I have been able to provide to my daughter, who started her university in San Diego two years back.” Karan’s favorite thing about himself is his discipline and being organized. “That has not diluted in all these years,” he adds. But he admits that he sometimes thinks too much.

Karan’s pet peeves: people who keep pets but cannot take care of them, who cannot maintain their things properly, and who do not



*Karan's house in the US at Rochester Hills, Michigan*

listen to others and are obsessed with themselves. He also doesn't get the idea behind spreading rumors and what people get out of it. While Karan's dependability and sincerity are his claims to fame, he does have an irrational fear of not feeling needed by anyone. If he could have one superpower, he'd like to not get older and avoid the health issues that come with it.

Three things no one at Newgen knows about Karan: his love for watching drama movies, being with nature and traveling (especially short train journeys), and his penchant for keeping his car ultra-clean all the time. ("For a long time, my kids hated me for my rule of no eating in the car!") A secret talent that he has recently developed, during the pandemic, is cooking. He recharges with power naps, a light podcast, a TED talk session, or a comedy show. After a hard day's work, he relaxes by watching a good game, preferably live. If Karan didn't have to sleep at all, he says, "I'd make sure I've addressed all urgent priorities (professionally and personally), and then watch a relaxing movie where I do not have to think too hard! And if time and money weren't an issue, I'd also like to pursue golf and do some leisure traveling to cities I haven't been to, especially in Europe and Australia."

Karan loves the fictional universe of the *Madagascar* movies, but he'd most like to live in the world of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham . . .* (Sometimes there is joy, sometimes there is sorrow...): "Living happily ever after, after some ups and downs. Knowing that even the most complex issues can be resolved if you want to, by putting your ego aside." If a movie on his life were to be made, he would like Amol Palekar to play his role. Karan has memorized the song "Itne Bazu Itne Sar" (So many arms and heads) from *Main Azaad Hoon*. "It's an Amitabh Bachchan starrer. The movie inspired me a lot!"

Speaking of inspirations, Ratan Tata is a huge one: “[It’s] unbelievable how humble he is and how much he has accomplished.” In fact, if Karan had to change his name, he would pick Ratan as his new name—“in an attempt to try and emulate the man by getting it right from day one!” On that note, Karan’s father played a vital role while growing up: “He is not with us anymore,” says Karan, “but I learned the power of consistency and dedication from him. The kind of respect he commanded at work and among his friends was tremendous.”

The top three items on Karan’s bucket list: watching a cricket match at Lord’s or a tennis match at Wimbledon, visiting Australia, and owning a business. Karan is always early, and the nicest compliment he has received is that he is a pleasure to work with—“both from my teams and my bosses!” he adds. Karan says he has been learning a lot from his Newgen colleagues, which has helped him in talking more intelligently to customers. Small things such as helping others and feeling accomplished with what has been done make his day better. His take on women’s place in today’s society: “No question around it—there is no reason for any differentiation when there is no difference in the skills/qualities/experience.”

Karan is a believer of the adage “the first impression is often a lasting impression.” The first thing he notices about a person is their overall attitude. In today’s world, Karan believes in reducing the overcommunication and the technology behind it—“it causes too many issues rather than helping!” *Winning* by Jack and Suzy Welch is the best book he has read. If he had to give a 40-minute presentation with no prior preparation, he would pick the topic “How to produce results by being consistent versus being brilliant.” Earning the

genuine appreciation of others is something he thinks everyone should do in their lives.

Stories of animal adoption warm Karan's heart. "I've always had dogs (and love the two dogs I have at the moment) and appreciate good attitude toward animals." If there was a fire in his house and all his loved ones were safe, Karan says he would save his car first: "I have put a lot of effort into maintaining it, and I can also run away from the fire as fast as possible!"

## A token of appreciation

Our Eco-Tree Project Coordinator, Raghu, received a certificate of appreciation from the Minister of Municipal Administration, Government of India, for our greening initiatives in Zone 8 (Anna Nagar area).



# Trip to Kuthiraivetti

..... NATARAJAN LOGANATHAN, *LWW Journals, Issue Team*

## A short visit to my beloved hideout: Kuthiraivetti/Manjolai Estate

I had sensed that after the Tamil Nadu elections there would be a lockdown. Many of the tourist places were either restricted or closed, so I opted for one of my favorite hideouts, Kuthiraivetti—well known



*Tea plantation*





*Natarajan (in the right center picture) and his friends Ganesh, Mani, and Sam at Kuthiraiveti. Views of the Manimuthar River and the Kuthiraiveti viewpoint can be seen in the background.*

as Manjolai Estate—which was easily accessible and wouldn't hurt my wallet. After choosing the place, I invited my usual travel partners, Ganesh from my own team and Mani from the XML team; as usual, they were in without any hesitation. We planned the trip a month in advance and booked train tickets to Tirunelveli. As this was my third



*Oothu Tea Factory*



*At the Kuthiraichetti Forest Guest House*



*View of the peak*



*Manjolai Estate*

visit here, the planning was easy. To me, Kuthiraivetti is a secret gem in Tamil Nadu, as most tourists travel till the Manimuthar Falls and return. Permission to visit the top is restricted, which means fewer tourists. I always gravitate toward this place for relaxation.

### **About Kuthiraivetti and its surroundings**

Located at about 90 km from Tirunelveli in southern Tamil Nadu, Kuthiraivetti is located inside the Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in the Western Ghats, at an approximate height of 6,000 feet. The place boasts of wet tropical evergreen woods and tremendous prairie lands. The mountains here offer incredible views of the Manjolai Estate, Kakachi, Nalumukku Estate, and Oothu, all



*Thamirabarani River*

situated on the course to Kuthiraivetti. Historically, this place was previously owned by the Zamindar of Singampatti and has been contracted by the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation for tea plantation since 1913. There are no private hotels here; only a few small shops with basic food items can be found.

### **Reaching Tirunelveli and moving to the hidden gem**

We arrived at the Tirunelveli Railway Station at 6 a.m. and boarded a bus to the midpoint, Kallidaikurichi. After breakfast, we took the only bus to Kuthiraivetti at 8:30 a.m. I spent the three-hour journey between hills and through dangerous hairpin bends recalling my memories of the destination. We reached by 11:45 a.m. and visited my friend's house there. As the only forest guest house was already



*View of the Row Houses in Oothu Estate*

booked, I asked his father if there was any place to stay. Thankfully, we got one empty house allotted for workers. Though I knew we would somehow find a room to stay, I heaved a sigh of relief! Sam Williamson, my friend's brother, also joined us for the sightseeing. Staying and roaming around the place at night is always a pleasure, and I find it hard to explain through words.

### **Staying and relaxing in Oothu**

We finished our lunch and walked through thick forests and tea plantations to arrive at the beautiful Manimuthar River viewpoint. It should be mentioned that only people who work in the tea factory stay in and around Kuthiraivetti. Ganesh and Mani listened as I described their lifestyle, history, and hurdles, which I'd come to know from my experiences during my previous visits.

Being with nature, relaxing in the fresh air, and listening to the chirping of small birds is always my cup of tea. We were also conscious of the wildlife residing there, but the locals are used to it. After relaxing in nature's lap for a while, we moved toward the tea factory by 7 p.m., with the complete darkness providing an adventurous joy.

We reached our room at around 8 p.m., where we rested for some time before heading to a small eatery nearby for our dinner, which we had ordered earlier. At around midnight, there were a few people walking around as the prayers for Easter had started. After a little chat, we headed to bed.

### **A healthy morning walk toward Kuthiraivetti Watch Tower**

The next day, we visited the Kuthiraivetti Watch Tower, which is 5 km from Oothu Estate. The route consists of even more dense forests,

and walking is quite a thrill even in broad daylight, as there is complete silence and hardly anyone in the vicinity. If you're lucky, you can see some wildlife, especially elephants and bears; I came across some in my previous visits. This time, we were anticipating a tiger—with definite fear inside us!—but nothing happened.

The beauty of the place has been preserved over the decades, and not much has changed. Kuthiraivetti is now a restricted place, the last point of public transport being Oothu. After a bath in a nearby unnamed falls, we boarded a bus to Kallidaikurichi by 11:30 a.m. and reached at around 2:00 p.m.

### **Visiting the Thamirabarani River and traveling back to Chennai**

Reaching Tirunelveli by 3:30 p.m., we took a bath in the Thamirabarani River and got our blessings from the Nellaiappar Temple. We then bought the famous Tirunelveli *halwa* for our families. Finally, we boarded our train back to Chennai, where we spent the journey going over the enjoyable memories of the past two days.

A saying that I staunchly believe in: “Travel opens our heart, broadens our mind, and fills our life with stories to tell.”

### **Important information**

This is not a popular tourist place. You may have to hire a cab or take your own vehicle, with prior permission from the Forest Department situated in Ambasamudram (Ambai). While no bikes are allowed for visitors to the place, there is no need to get permission if one is traveling by bus to Kuthiraivetti.

### ***Permission for staying at the forest guest house***

Permission has to be obtained from the Ambai Forest Department, which is verified at the Manimuthar check post before entering Manjolai Estate.

A limited number of cabs per day are allowed for sightseeing.

### ***Bus timings***

From Tirunelveli to Kuthiraivetti: 2 a.m.

From Kallidaikurichi to Kuthiraivetti: 8:30 a.m.

From Kuthiraivetti to Kallidaikurichi: 6:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.

### ***Cellphone connectivity***

Only BSNL network connects here. But there is a tower receiver erected opposite the Oothu Tea Factory for using mobile data.

### ***Online booking***

Online booking is now available for Kuthiraivetti. No separate permission from the Forest Department is required if you book the rooms online. Only two rooms are available.

Show a copy of your booking at the Manimuthar check post and proceed. For bookings, visit <http://kmtr.co.in/> and choose the location as Ambasamudram.

If you would like to know more about the trip, write to Natarajan at [natarajan.loganathan@newgen.co](mailto:natarajan.loganathan@newgen.co).

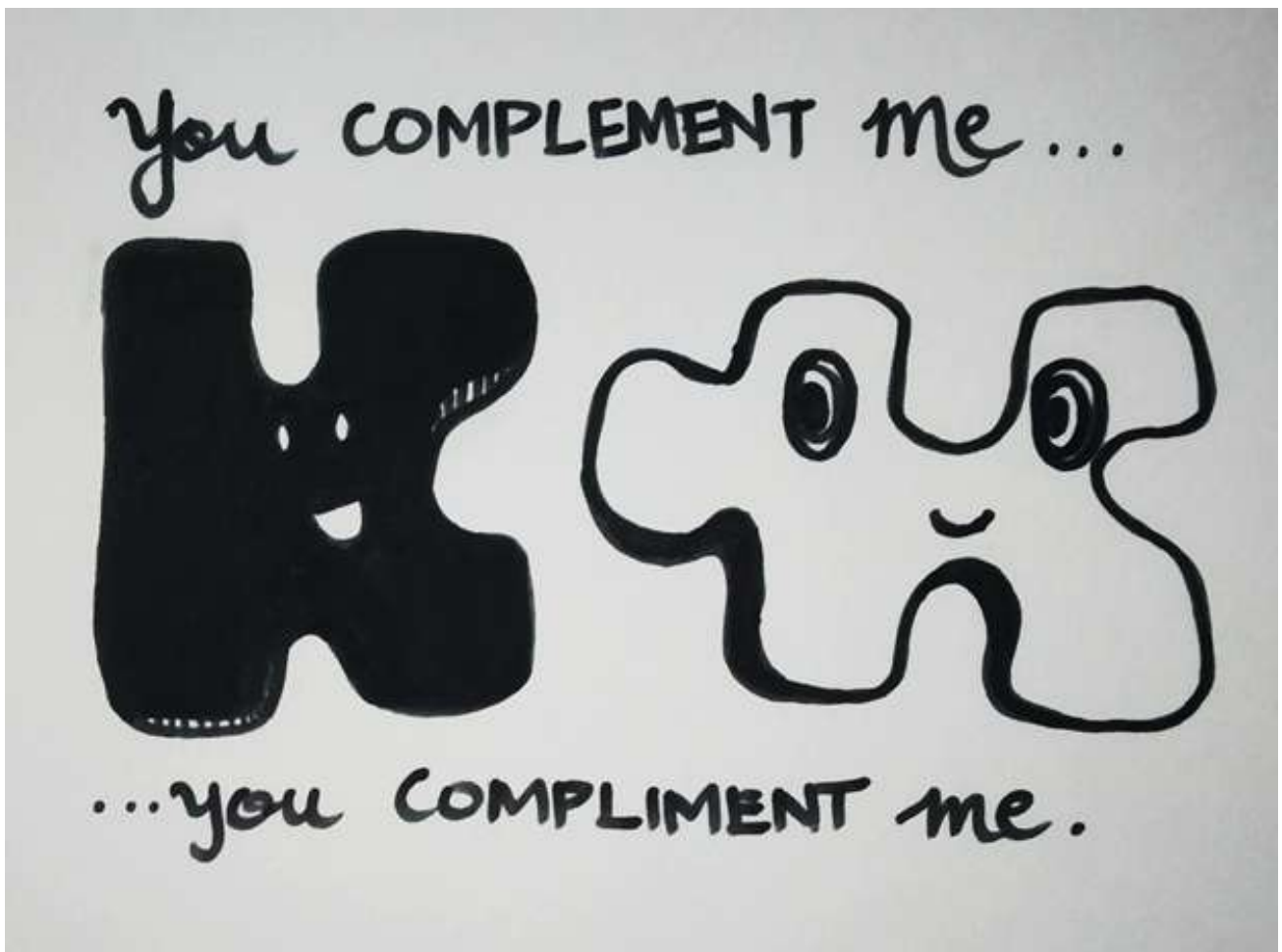


# Puzzle Pieces



**SHRUTHI MANIYODATH**, *Junior Project Manager, Peter Lang*

Ever wondered how much we are like  
Puzzle pieces? No two are alike.  
Each a different shape, design and quality  
A slot here, a bump there  
Sometimes, an edge that's straight or one that's curvy.



You could be rough around the edges,  
Worn with use  
Or smooth like butter,  
Precision cut and new.

You stand out but always fit in  
You yearn to fill a spot  
Or find the piece beside you that's missing.

Piece by piece  
Place them together  
That's how the puzzle makes sense,  
One complementing the other.

If you ever feel lost  
In this ever-so-puzzling life,  
When it comes to puzzles,  
Puzzle piece, you ought to realize:  
You are unique, irreplaceable  
And built to complement.  
You're a tab to a blank, a left to a right  
And undoubtedly a puzzle piece in someone else's life.

# தனிமை

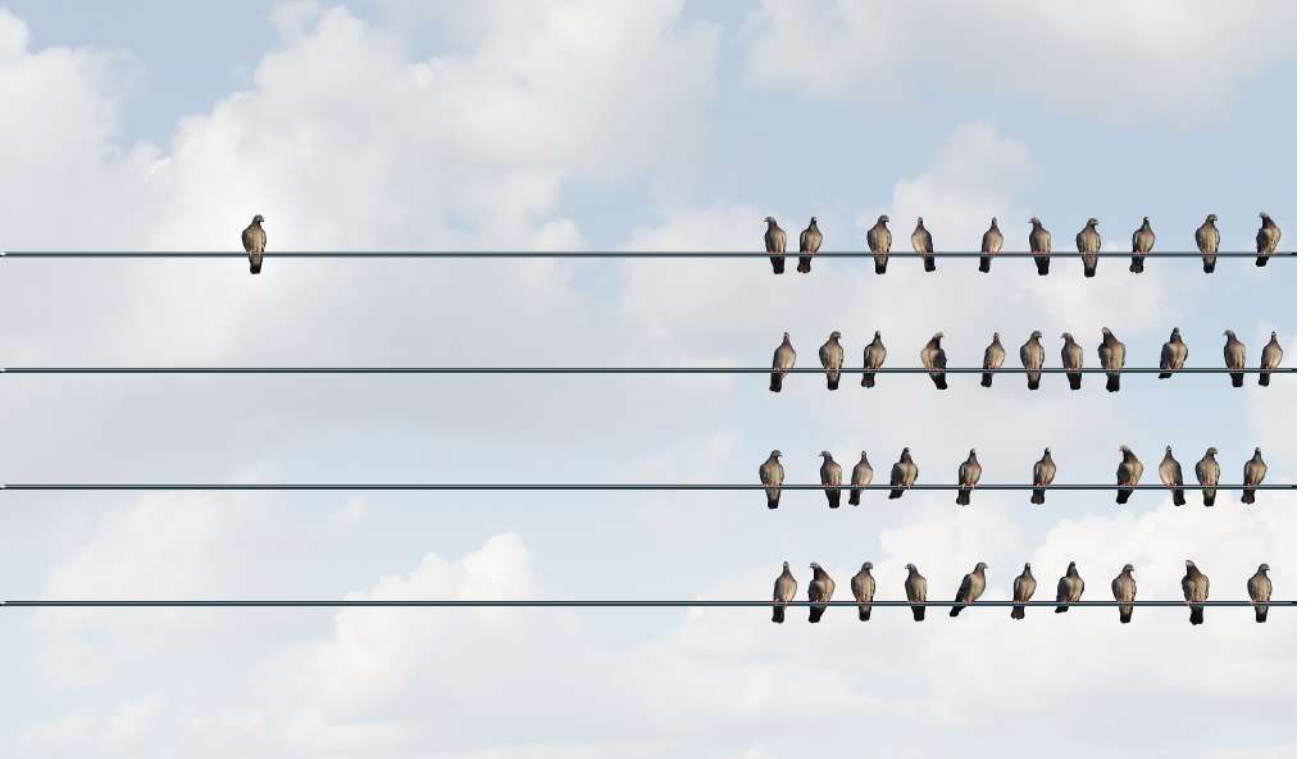
INBAKKAVI PT, *Senior Executive XML, CBPT*

உன் கரம் பிடித்து நடந்துச் செல்ல  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...

இடைப்பிடித்து அணைத்து நடக்க  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...

கடலலையில் கால் நனைத்து  
ஆடை நனைய ஆட்டம் போட  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...

கெஞ்சலும் கொஞ்சலும் சிணுங்கலுமாய்  
அன்பைப் பரிமாற  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...



தொடர்ந்து விட நீயும்  
தொடர முடியாமல் நானும்  
மனதோடுப் போராட  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...

திமிரும் அன்பும் நிறைந்த  
விழிகளை காண முடியாமல்  
தவித்துத் துடிக்க  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...

அழகான மாலை பொழுதை  
அன்பானவன் உன்னோடு  
ஆசையாய் பேசி அகம் மகிழ  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...

என் கனவுகளை எல்லாம்  
நிஜத்தில் தொடர்ந்திட  
போதுமானதாய் இருந்தது தனிமை...

கண்களால் கவிதை எழுதும்  
விந்தை கற்றவனே!  
ஓராயிரம் கண்களுக்குள் நடுவே  
என் மௌன மொழி அறிந்தவனே!  
என் தனிமைகளை  
களவாடிய கள்வனே!

உன் வாசம் சுமந்தவள்  
உன் வசமானவள்  
இன்று உன் வாசம்  
தேடி அலைகின்றேன்  
கிடைக்காத தனிமைக்காக  
தவிக்கின்றேன்..

உன்னோடு இருந்த  
தனிமையின் பொழுதுகள்  
இனிமையானது- நீயில்லா  
இத்தனிமை நரகமானது...

உன் கரம் தீண்டா நான் மட்டுமல்ல  
உன் கண் தீண்டா என் கவிதைகளும்  
ஏங்குகிறது உனக்காக.....

# என் பரிசு!

AFROSE, *Project Manager, OUP Books*



நம் மூதாதையர்கள் பாதச்சுவடுகள்  
முற்றிலும் மறைந்து விட்டது...!  
விளை நிலங்கள் இப்போது  
விலை நிலமாக மாறிவிட்டது...!

ஏரிகள் மீது லாரிகளுக்கு வேளை என்ன...!  
கேணியை அழித்து விட்டு  
இங்கு வெறும் கானி நிலம் இருக்கிறது..!

மருத்துவ மரங்களை அழித்து விட்டு  
மாத்திரை கடைகளில் மானியம்....!  
நம் முன்னோர்கள் நமக்கு பரிசளித்த  
வயல்வெளியை அழித்து விட்டு  
மென்பொருள் செயலியை  
அடுத்த தலைமுறைக்கு பரிசளிக்க போகிறோமா....?

இலவசம் இன்றோடு  
தன் இறுதி மூச்சை விட்டும்...!  
இனி நாடு இளைஞர் வசம் ஆகட்டும்...!  
காகித பெட்டியில் உள்ள கந்தக தூளாய்  
விழித்தெழு, வினாடிகளை விதைத்திட...!

இனி நம்புதிய சுதந்திர காற்றை  
சுலப தவனணயில் சுவாசிப்போம்...!  
அச்சுலப தவனண நிரந்தரமாக்கி  
அடுத்த தலைமுறைக்கு செயற்கை நுண்ணறிவோடு  
இயற்கையின் பகுத்தறிவையும் பரிசளிப்போம்....!

## திண்ணைக் கிழத்தி

..... AROCKIA ALEXANDER, *Manager, CBPET*

ஆம்! திண்ணை ராஜ்ஜியத்தின் கிழத்தி (தலைவி) அவள்!

பின்னாத நரைத்த கறுத்த கூந்தல்  
கொண்டிருப்பாள் அந்தத் திண்ணைக் கிழவி!

தள்ளாத வயதிலும் தடியூன்றி நடப்பாள்  
பொல்லாத கண்களுக்கு உறுத்துவாள்  
வேறெங்கும் செல்லாது வீடுகாத்து வாழ்வாள்!

தங்கட்டி கணம் தாங்காது காதுகள் தொங்கும்  
ஆனால் காதுகள் நன்றாய் கேட்கும்!  
ரவிக்கையை பார்த்திராத அவள் மார்புகளை  
முந்தானைகள் மட்டுமே போர்த்தி இருக்கும்!

பாக்கு இடிக்கும் உரலின் ஓசையே அவள்  
உருவாக்கும் சங்கீத ஸ்வரங்கள்!  
தாம்பூலத்தின் மருத்துவ மகத்துவம் அறிந்ததனாலே  
பற்களின்றியும் பழக்கத்தை விடுவது இல்லை!



*Photo courtesy of Arunkumar*

குழந்தைகள் அழும் விதத்திலே அதன்  
காரணம் சொல்லிவிடுவாள் அந்தக் கிழவி!  
பாட்டி வைத்தியத்தில் அக்கறையின் அன்பும் இருந்தது  
இன்றைய வைத்தியத்தில் அவை எங்கோ பறந்தது!

அவளின் தடிக்கு அத்தனை காகங்களும் பயப்படும்  
காயப்போட்டவைகளை தூக்காமல் அப்படியே புறப்படும்!  
எண்ணெய் குளியலுக்கு பரிந்துரை பலப்படும்!

பாட்டியை ஊரில் வைத்துவிட்டு நகரில்  
கண்காணிப்பு கேமிராக்களும் வளர்ப்பு நாய்களும்  
அவளின் மாற்றாக பணிசெய்ய முயற்சிக்கும்!

பாட்டியை மறந்துபோன நகர மனங்கள்  
மருத்துவ நிலையங்களுக்கு படையெடுக்கும்!

அவள் மறந்துபோன பிறகே அவளின் மகத்துவம்  
பாவிமனங்களுக்கு ஏனோ புரிய ஆரம்பிக்கும்!

# நானும், நானும்

KANNAN, *Quality Controller, CBPT*

நான் வேறு என் மனம் வேறு  
இரண்டும் ஒன்று இல்லை.  
அவன் எந்தன் சகபயணி  
இருவரும் ஒன்றாக பயணிக்கிறோம்  
ஆனால் வேறு வேறு திசைகளில்  
நான் முன் நோக்கி தள்ளப்படுகிறேன்  
அவன் பின்னோக்கி பறந்து கொண்டே இருக்கிறான்  
அடங்குவதும் அடக்கப்படுவதும் எங்களுக்குள் இல்லை  
சில நேரங்களில் நான் வெளியிலிருந்து அவனை பார்க்கிறேன்  
அவன் என்னுள் இருந்து தான் உலகையே பார்க்கிறான்

ஆனால் அவன் பால்யத்தோடு முடிந்து போன  
பழைய உலகத்தில் ரீங்காரமாய் திரிந்து கொண்டு  
இருக்கிறான்  
இன்னும் அவன் புத்தக பையில் மயிலிறுகும் பனஞ்சோறும்  
பத்திரமாய் இருக்கின்றன.

நான் நகரத்தின் பொருளாதார சுரங்களில்  
நகங்கள் கிழிய தங்கம் சுரண்டி கொண்டேயிருக்கிறேன்.  
அவன் கிராமத்து நாற்றங்காலில் அன்றேக்கு தேவையான  
அரிசியை நடவு செய்து கொண்டிருக்கிறான்.

அலைகழிக்கப்பட்ட செலவுகளின் கணக்கு வழக்குகளில்  
கடைசியில் எதுவும் மிச்சமில்லை குளீருட்ட பட்ட  
அறையில் கூட உறக்கமில்லா இரவுகளோடு

அவனுக்கு கணக்கும் இல்லை வழக்கும் இல்லை  
கிடைத்த இடத்தில் உறங்கி கொள்கிறான்  
ஈவு இரக்கம் எதுவும் அற்று

நான் எஞ்சிய நாட்களுக்காக இன்று வாழ்கிறேன்  
அவன் இன்றைய நாளை இன்றே வாழ்கிறான்.  
உற்றாரும் உறவும், சுற்றமும் போக மிச்சமிருந்தால்  
எந்தன் ஆசைக்கு  
அவன் ஆசை தீர அனுவபவித்து விட்டு  
மிச்ச மீதியை வீசி எறிகிறான்.



நான் சதா அலைந்து கொண்டேயிருக்கிறான்  
 உணர்வுகளின் மயிர்கால்கள் கொண்டு குறுக்கும்,  
 நெடுக்குமாய் வலமும் புறமுமாய், வழிமறந்த  
 ஒரு ரயில் பூச்சியை போல

அவன் அமைதியாய் மிகவும் அமைதியாய் ஏகாந்த சிறகுகள்  
 மெல்ல அசைத்து விருப்பமான விரல்கள் தொட்டு  
 வாழ பிறந்த வண்ணத்து பூச்சியாய் எல்லா திசைகளிலும்  
 பறந்து கொண்டுக்கிறான்.

சில நேரங்களில் கார சாரமாய் விவாதித்து கொள்கிறோம்

நான் கையில் வேல் கொண்ட காட்டு மிராண்டியாய்  
 அழுத படியே தோற்று போகிறேன்.  
 அவன் வெற்றி தோல்வி எதுவும் அற்று சிரித்த படியே  
 கடந்து போகிறான்.

எங்கள் விவாதங்கள் உணர்வூர்வமானவை  
 அறிவுக்கு அங்கு இடமே இல்லை  
 ஒன்றை ஒன்று முந்தி கொண்டு பாயும்  
 அலைகளின் எண்ண ஓட்டங்களில் உணர்வுகளின்  
 ஒளி பிழம்பாய் விவாதங்கள் செய்வோம்

சில நேரம் இருவரும் அமைதி கொள்வோம்

தொட்டழுத்தி விரல்கள் பற்றி ஒரு திசையில் பயணிப்போம்  
 பிரபஞ்சத்தின் மெய் விரல் தீண்டும் மெல்லிய  
 ஸ்பரிசங்களில் அமைதி கொள்வோம்



கூழாங்களை முத்தமிட்டு குமிழ்ங்களாய் உடைந்து  
ஓடும் என் நதியில் நீராடும்போது

தும்பிகள் அதன் வலைகளால் பின்ன பட்ட  
சிறகுகளின் ரீங்காரத்தில்  
ஓ வென்று கொட்டி ஆர்பரிக்கும் அருவியின்  
தாரத்து அமைதியில்

காற்றில் நகரும் வண்ண ஓவியத்தின் மெல்லிய துகள்கள்  
உதிரும் ஒரு வண்ணத்து பூச்சியின் சிறகசைப்பில்  
எதிர்பாராமல் முத்தமிட்டு செல்லும்  
குழந்தைகளின் ஸ்பரிசத்தில்

வானம் மழையின் கைகளால் வீசி  
எறியும் சாரல்களில்

மாத கடைசியின் அழுக்கடைந்த கடைசி ஐம்பது ரூபாயை  
நடை பாதையில் யாசகமாய் கேட்கிற  
அந்த பிஞ்சு விரல்களின் தொடுதலில்  
அதன் பிறகு பட்டினி கிடக்கிற நீண்ட பகல் பொழுதில்

வான்கோவின் ஓவியத்தில்  
டால்ஸ்டாயின் எழுத்துக்களில்  
பாரதியின் பாடல்களில்  
பெரும் வலியோடு பிரசவிக்கின்ற என் கவிதைகளில்  
நாங்கள் அமைதி கொள்கிறோம்  
ஆழ்கடலின் நிசப்த அமைதி போல்

வேறு வேறு உலகத்து ஜீவ ராசிகளை போல  
பாஷைகளற்ற பரிவர்த்தனைகளும்  
புன்னகையின் பரிமாற்றங்களோடு  
ஒரு எல்லையற்ற சமவெளியை  
கை கோர்த்த படி கடந்து போகிறோம்

நெருக்கியடிக்கிற பொருளாதார பிரச்சினைக்கு மத்தியில்  
நீ தான் என் நிதர்சன வாழ்வை மீட்டு கொடுக்கிறாய்  
எந்த மெனக்கிடலும் இல்லாமல்  
வாழ்வு நமக்கு மிச்சமிருக்கிறது

நீ மூச்சு முட்ட ஓடிக்கொண்டிருக்கிற தார்சாலைக்கு  
பக்கத்தில் தான் காத்து கொண்டிருக்கின்றன  
வெளிர் மஞ்ச நிற பூக்களும் அதில்  
உயிர் ஊட்டுக்கிற பட்டாம் பூச்சிகளும்

எனக்கொரு ஆசையிருக்கிறது அவனை போல் வாழ  
அவனுக்கு தான் ஆசையில்லை யாரை போலவும் வாழ  
நான் வேறு என் மனம் வேறு  
இரண்டும் ஒன்றில்லை

# வழிப்போக்கன்...!

..... JEEVANANTHAM, *Senior Executive Quality Control, Education Division*

இந்த உடல் நாம் அல்ல  
இந்த உருவமும் நாம் அல்ல  
இயற்கை அன்னை கொடுத்த  
உடையும் உருவுமே இந்த உடல்

பழைமை பட்டதும்  
உடையை மாற்றித்தான் ஆகவேண்டும்

இங்கு நிரந்தர பந்தம் என எதுவும் இல்லை!  
நடப்பன அனைத்தும் முன்பே எழுதப்பட்டவை அல்ல  
ஆனால் முன்பே தீர்மானிக்கப்பட்டவை!

எதனையும் மாற்ற நாம் உருவாக்கப்படவில்லை  
உருவாக்கப்பட்ட ஒவ்வொன்றும் தம்மைத் தாமே  
உருமாற்றிக்கொள்ளும் தேவை ஏற்படின்!



எதனையும் மாற்ற நாம் உருவாக்கப்படவில்லை  
உருவாக்கப்பட்ட ஒவ்வொன்றும் தம்மைத் தாமே  
உருமாற்றிக்கொள்ளும் தேவை ஏற்படின்!

ஆற்றின் நீர் ஓடிக்கொண்டே  
இருந்தால்தான் அதற்கு மதிப்பு,  
ஓட்டத்தில் சோர்வு கண்டு  
ஓடுங்கி விட்டாலோ  
இனிமேல் பாய்ந்து செல்ல மாட்டேன்  
என பதுங்கி விட்டாலோ  
தேங்கிய நீர் தேசம் முழுக்க வீசத்துவங்கும்.

நீரின் சிறப்பே ஓடுவது தான்  
இல்லையேல்  
மழை எங்கே...??  
அது சேரும் கடல் தான் எங்கே...??

ஓட பயந்தால்,  
உருள பயந்தால்,  
உடைய பயந்தால்,  
கூழாங்கற்கள் தான் எங்கே...??

இவை எவையும் தம்மைத் தாமே  
மாற்றுவதும் இல்லை  
மாற்றத்தை நினைப்பதும் இல்லை,  
நினைத்து கலங்குவதும் இல்லை...!!  
இயற்கையோடு பயணிக்கின்றன  
இயற்கையாகவே பயணிக்கின்றன...!!!

குழந்தை விழுந்தால் தான் எழ கற்றுக் கொள்ளும்  
நீ விழாமல் பார்த்துக்கொண்டால் அது எழுவது எப்போது??

நீ மானை காப்பாற்றினால்  
சிங்கத்திற்கு உணவு ஏது??

ஒன்றின் அழிவு தான் மற்றதன் துவக்கம்  
அதற்காக நீ அழிய வேண்டும் எனக் கூறவில்லை  
ஓடு...  
தொடர்ந்து ஓடு...  
இயற்கையாக ஓடு...  
இயற்கையோடு ஓடு...

உனக்கென நியமிக்கப்பட்ட பாதையில் ஓடு....  
அழிவோ!!! ஆக்கமோ!!! அது  
நமது கைகளில் அல்ல.

இங்கு பிறந்த ஒவ்வொன்றுக்கும் ஒரு செயல் உண்டு  
அதன் போக்கை மாற்ற நாம் யார்??

உண்பதும்,  
தாமே உண்ணப்படுவதும் இயற்கை  
அத்தகைய இயற்கையின் சிறகில் உள்ள சிறு பகுதியே நாம்...

காற்றினோடு பறக்கும் சிறகினைப் போல  
நாமும் இயற்கையோடு பயணிப்போம்.

இயற்கையை மாற்ற நாம் இயற்கையை  
மீறிய படைப்பல்ல, இயற்கையினுள் ஒருவனே நாம்...

மாற்றங்களால் உருவாக்கப்பட்ட நாம்  
இங்கு மாற்றத்தை உருவாக்க முற்படுகிறோம்  
இயற்கையின் சிறகை ஓடித்து...

ஒன்றை மறந்தே போனோம்  
அந்த ஓடித்த சிறகில் தான் நாமும் உள்ளோம்....

இன்னும் அழகுபட சொல்ல வேண்டுமானால்  
(அழகுபட சொல்லக்கூடிய விஷயமல்ல)  
அந்த ஓடிந்த சிறகே நாம் தான்...!!

இருக்கும் வரையில் இயற்கையோடு இருப்போம்  
இயற்கையாக இருப்போம்  
இங்கு  
நாம் அனைவரும் ஒரு வழிப்போக்கனே  
நட்பனவற்றை நடப்பவையாக பார்க்க மட்டுமே அனுமதிக்கப்பட்ட  
வழிப்போக்கன்....!!!

## E D I T O R I A L B O A R D

*Meet Kalyani Mirajkar, the newest addition to the Reflections Editorial Board. It gives me immense pleasure in welcoming Kalyani to join the Reflections team. Read all about her in this section and in her own words. ~ Lydia*



Hello everyone! This is Kalyani. I have had a versatile past – from a high-flying corporate job to running my own little cafe in the hills. I have worked in various cities across the country, such as Pune, Jaipur,

and Hyderabad, and in different countries, such as the USA, the Philippines, Ghana, and Nigeria.

One of my favourite things to do is to go on road trips. I have traveled by car across most of North India and have done two long-distance road trips – from Delhi to Pune and Delhi to Hyderabad. My travels gave way to a desire to settle somewhere remote and I now find myself in a small village in Uttarakhand, where I now have my home.

My biggest passion is wildlife/nature. I have spent many hours sitting quietly on some river bank, deep in the jungles of the Corbett Tiger Reserve, on a stakeout for the elusive tiger. I have had many fortunate sightings of the tiger and along the way encountered other marvels of nature as well. I write about my forest experiences and road trips whenever I get the time, and my blog is largely about that. On one such trip to Corbett, I went further into the state of Uttarakhand and came to the lake city of Nainital. During British time, Nainital was a quaint hill station; now, it is a bustling tourist destination. My love for the hills started here. When the time came to start something of my own, I chose to move to the hills and start a cafe at another popular tourist location – Bhimtal – adjacent to an emerald green lake. I named it The Birdsong Cafe.



With time, I realized I needed to find a more sustainable way of living in harmony with nature. The first step towards that would be to grow my own food and recycle everything (or as much as I can) in my control. With that in mind, I moved further into the hills and now live in a small village called Garhgaon. The mighty Mukteshwar



mountain looks upon me and the valley below it nurtures me. There is still a long way for me to go in my journey towards a self-sustainable life but I have embarked upon it.

My two lovely dogs and one cat have been in the journey with me. The dogs have joined me from the hills itself and the cat has been an old companion. My husband takes frequent breaks from his hectic city life and joins me and soon will also be a *pahadi* like me.





*A watercolor painting (above) by David Becker, Wolters Kluwer, of a photo (below) taken by Arunkumar, project manager, NPUK Onshore team. This photo was one of many featured in the July 2021 issue of Reflections*

# “Nothing” by Bruno Major

..... UJWALA VAIDYANATHAN, *Senior Manager, Books Copyediting team*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucRVDoFkcxc&ab\\_channel=BrunoMajor](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucRVDoFkcxc&ab_channel=BrunoMajor)

This soft and most romantic song will make you want to fall in love! Released as part of Bruno Major’s album “To Let a Good Thing Die,” the lyrics are exquisite. It is music for all times and seasons, and the emotions are soothing and healing.

Most love songs are grandiose in their expression—the lovers are ready to take a bullet, bring down the moon, collect stars, ride on the rainbow... really? But this gem here is enthralling in its simplicity. No fancy clothes and grand dinners for the lovers—just track suits and red wine. Their idea of a date is a movie watched at home. Note the twist of words where Bruno says “take off our phones ... and turn off our shoes.” Wait! Shouldn’t it be the other way round? What was he thinking? Either he is smitten with love and not noticing the jumble, or is it that it doesn’t matter either way and he wants to relax, kicking off the shoes and muting the phone when his beloved is around?

A game of Nintendo where he wouldn’t mind losing—because he has eyes for nothing but her. And the damndest and the most beautiful



words are, “But there's nothing like doing nothing with you.” When silence and “doing nothing” are comfortable between two people, it is the ultimate love one can have.

There is nothing cheesy or clichéd about this love story: just stolen glances, simple dances, the mundane act of doing to death a movie they both love and the peace of the roof rather than the shimmering stars. This romance is like soft falling petals, tender and simple!

Some songs are meant to be played at parties, some at discos, some at huge gatherings and yet others at family times. Some while wooing a partner, some during solitude. But this song needs to be played in the biggest arena—the mind—where you can play and replay it, analyze it, find comfort, and bask in its warmth.

Check out the lyrics here:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=nothing+bruno+major+lyrics&rlz=1C1GCEU\\_enIN812IN812&oq=nothing+bruno+major+lyrics&aqs=chrome..69i57.9061j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=nothing+bruno+major+lyrics&rlz=1C1GCEU_enIN812IN812&oq=nothing+bruno+major+lyrics&aqs=chrome..69i57.9061j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8).



*Photo courtesy of Bibi Christa Xavier. A view of her backyard showing cranes foraging for worms and small insects on the tilled land just before the sowing season begins*