

# NULL & VOID | OJASWINI TRIVEDI

You're lost in a fantasy  
A dream maybe  
Where I cease to exist.  
You seem peaceful,  
I seem greedy.

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## SLING SHOT: Let's say we loved each other! Ojaswini Trivedi

"Let's believe  
the two birds  
lived in a  
seamless crave for freedom,  
where the abyss  
melted into the horizon"

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## An Opportunity to Look East – IIC Experience | Manohar Khushalani

During the North East fest on Monday, the 29th October, at the Fountain Lawns, the audience was confronted by a disturbing

solo performance by actor director, Lapdiang Syiem from Meghalaya, called A Being Human. Earlier on the same day we had a presentation by Soli Roy about a Manipuri play, Crimson Rainclouds, written by his own mother, Sahitya Akademi Awardee, Binodini Devi

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## **An Ode to Sushant | Renu Mal**

In April, Sushant had deleted all his old pictures that he had posted since he created his account on Instagram. Yet nobody had time to look into his trauma. Read the touching Ode Renu Mal has dedicated to his memory

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## **The Forbidden Fruit of today: CLOSURE / Ojaswini Trivedi**

We spend years and years trying to find answers to the half spoken sentences and mid-air collapsed promises. The night teases us to insomnia, trying to replay the tape of those incidents, moments, gestures. What could have been, what should have been We spend years and years trying to find answers to the half spoken sentences and mid-air collapsed promises. The night teases us to insomnia, trying to replay the tape of those incidents, moments, gestures. What could have been, what should have been. Were we real then

. Were we real then?

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# Under the Grid of Sub Reality / Susmita Mukherjee



Hag

The old hag lay face down,  
Her dried hair up in the air,  
Like dry twigs after harvest.  
Her scrawny left arm upturned  
at an angle, as if not sure,  
whether for alms or in benediction;  
Her other hand, mottled, was tucked way under, gripping her  
squashed belly bag.

She lay there for eons,

under the grid of the sub reality radars that were new in the neighborhood,  
their flickering light beams stinging her, serpent like, into convulsions.

Sometimes she moaned.  
At times she farted, and,  
noxious fumes  
volcano like, filled the air.

Too tired to be angry, she lifted her aged bum to pee,  
And out flowed waters  
that swirled and twirled in dizzy vortexes and caused  
unnecessary delay around the area.

Too tired to get up, she shook her head and colours,  
like flashing lightning,  
danced with the grid overhead and trapped her in place.

" I don't like being watched, you wretches"  
she said,  
But the soundless sound,  
rumbled into the countless clatter of car honks, and busyness,  
as another coin dropped into her upturned hand.

" Can't you spare an old hag who has done you no harm"?  
Her moan took the shape of a saliva drop that fell under her  
breath.

No, no, she must not give up! Not yet!

The hag knew that as long as she wrapped herself around her  
belly bag,  
her little ones would survive.

She remembers the hard years,  
when the singeing blast  
had ripped her right breast,  
her milk buds had scattered and mushroomed in the sky,

She remembers how her public rain forest had been blazed down by a careless cigarette.

She remembers not so long ago, bullets, bayonettes, bombs and blasts,  
whistling over her body, as she curled around her belly bag.

“Stop it”! she warned  
“Stop it”! she wailed  
“Stop it”! she whimpered a command.

But no one was listening  
to the old hag,  
Old Mother Earth,  
as she lay face down,  
Under the giant grid,  
Walked over, used and thrown,  
An old useless Mother.

Susmita Mukherjee  
9- 4-2020

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# The Only Whole Thing / Susmita Mukherjee



I will give you a piece of my land,  
I will give you a piece of my kid's custody,  
I will give you the healthier half of the meal,  
I will give you the lions share of my earnings,  
I will give you freedom; credit for what you have not done,  
I will give you a piece of my jewels, my cars, my credit  
cards,  
I will give you a piece of maintance, legal fees, even  
alimony,

But I will not give you a piece of my mind,  
because even though you don't get it,  
It is the only whole thing I have,  
The only land where I will find my peace,  
Where I will pick up the pieces,  
Into peace..  
Soon, soon..  
That I promise!

Norma Torian

Susmita Mukherjee from the heart cave of mother wounds.

8th March.

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**A Sinister flight! Poem by  
Aneeta Chitale**



Birds over the sinister city  
I was a happy bird...with great  
Wings to fly ...thousands of miles  
In open skies....in cloudy pallets  
I flew in seamless oceans  
Across the seven seas and  
Five continents....in peace!  
I knew I was the best chosen  
By The Creator....God! Almighty!

I flew in all directions...untill  
One day, me and my friends  
flew to Wuhun....China.

The land of plenty  
The stuff the make..'.'made in China!'  
I flew no more....as  
I could feel and see sinister things one day...17 feb 2020  
I saw people in bio...suits wearing masks....  
These were the human beings  
Plundering in n out  
With Masks tied on their faces  
They rattled here and there...

Untill ...we saw many humans succumb to deaths ...in thousands!

No birds flew, no birds chirped, no peacocks danced, and no  
humans were seen ...  
In broad day light, as if the sun had not rose ....on those

days...

The deaths tolled but no one cried  
Of pathos and woes!  
Their were silent fickle cries  
...no moaning of deaths...no sermons read...  
when your  
Beloved parts....suffocated breaths!

The hues...very stoic n still  
Roads that roared of thousands of cars n speeding vehicles  
Were barren ....all deserted roads  
The people were sick...were quarantined by state n folks!

No birds chirped, peacocks danced, no church bells rang  
No tombs clad with wreath!  
No obscience no moaning pictures  
Captured...  
No ships sailed! No Airplanes flew  
No tubes shuttled  
All that rattled were people  
On masks n deathbeds!

No Monk came to bless the departed!  
No President read grieving speeches!  
No Countries were told of  
This pandemic and deaths charts read  
They hushed up WHO !

Such is the gloom and cunning guise  
All under the subterfuge , of a Corona Virus- Mask!  
No people spoke in Chinese Lands!  
Their markets closed in Wuhun!

Then...we all paled in the face of death...my friends went to  
far of lands ....  
Thinking it were safe n happy,  
But my friends the Corona Virus had plagued....more deaths in  
this pandemic....

Millions lay sick and fighting for life!  
The Leaders of Countries World Over, were shattered  
But uttered words of promise n hope for mankind!  
Cities are locked down, no ships catered on ocean routes  
No planes flew in blue skies  
No peacocks danced this Spring Season  
No Spring Equinox celebrated!

No birds flew in seamless skies...  
But birds and animals gathered in hooks and  
Prayed for all beings well being!

The shepherd's took a different route !  
Something is sinister down China road!

The old traders, turned their routes off- China routes!  
The Black Blanket Covered it all!

I flew away, away thousands of miles  
With my friends ...!  
I knew this....when I saw my reflection in crystal clear  
waters!

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# **Raunaq & Jassi: Watch Out Thespians, Bollywood is Here / Manohar Khushalani**



The Legendary Balcony scene,  
in **Raunaq and Jassi** inspired  
from **Romeo and Juliet**

The show of **Raunaq & Jassi** at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium was a blockbuster, though, not as big as Director **Feroz Abbas Khan's** earlier hit, **Mughal E Azam**. What appears to be a new trend or perhaps a solution for the beleaguered Amateur Theatre, about how to make the ends meet. The approach is to be commercially savvy. Have a big budget production with all the frills that technology demands, get a sponsor and launch it on a big scale. Designed by John Narun, the Cyclorama had the digital projections of luminescent landscapes and skyscapes with a wow appeal. Lighting by David Lander was in sync with the background projection just as Fali Unwala's set was. The arches and balustrades seem to flow out of the landscapes. Piyush Kanojia has given the foot tapping melodious music, and Mayuri Upadhya choreographing the play with Bollywood style vigorous dances, Yes, one is giving credits to the technical crew first because they were largely responsible for the bells and whistles which made the production stand up and be noticed. Talking about the technical crew, one cannot ignore audio projection, which was flawless with the actors using Bluetooth microphones to be heard loud and clear. This is where some discomfort is felt by traditional actors who have been trained in mikeless voice projections. The nuances and earthy qualities of human voice are lost and actors tend to ignore making the effort to modulate their speech patterns. This was clearly visible to a trained ear when the actors tended to declaim rather than emote. So let's not get carried away by the glitz and glamour.

The script which was obviously inspired by Shakespeare's, **Romeo & Juliet**, was written by Iqbal Raj. The poetic adaptation was indeed remarkable and played a major role in success of the production. The lyrical quality of the verse did full justice to the bards tale. Like the original 16th century play, "Raunaq and Jassi" too explores a long-standing hatred between two feuding families the Jagirdars and Chaudharys, and a chance encounter leading to an intense romance between young Raunaq (Omkar Patil) and Jassi ( Neha

Sargam) who belong to either clans, leads to a compelling tale of helpless but hapless love. The two lovers are torn between loyalties to their own clans and the fatal attraction to each other.

Khan, however, insists his production was an original script told in an Indian context."It is kind of a homage to Shakespeare, but it is a completely original piece of writing, and the fact that we are doing a musical, that's the fresh aspect of it," He is reported to have said. There is some truth in that because, very simply, while **Romeo and Juliet** can be considered a tragedy as the protagonists – the young lovers – are faced with a momentous obstacle that results in a horrible and fatal conclusion. On the other hand Iqbals play has a happy ending because Raunaq is able to convince both families to give up their decades old rivalry and allow them to marry.

The play has a huge cast of 30 artistes including dancers and actors, It has 11 songs including two original compositions by the playwright. The performers have done a remarkable job. Dancers were agile and their steps were in perfect sync with the music. While the character of Jassi is played by Neha Sargam, actors Omkar Patil and Mahendra Singh Pal took turns to play Raunaq. One does not know who was playing Raunaq,s role on the day of the show. Neha's performance stood out for her intensity laced with live singing. What is remarkable is the fact that all performers sang live, there was no playback except for the background scores which were played behind the crooner's voice in Karaoke style. The lead singer Mirande Shah was like the spine of the play her matchless singing held the play together as she doubled up as a Sutradhar. The audience was applauding clapping and tapping their toes with memorable folk songs such as 'Dama Dam Mast Kalandar', 'Kala Sha Kala' and 'Tumhe Pyaar'. This review would be incomplete without a word for performers who played supporting roles.and gave substance and flesh to the story. Dhai Maa (Sonal Jha) and

Gurdip Mama (Jeetendra Shastri), who had a romantic history of their own in the play gave a peppy performance and drew huge applause. Gurneet in the role of Jarnell, the antagonist suitor of Jasssi with his remarkable stage presence was impressive. Farhan Fatema gave a robust enactment as the Chaudhraen with her clear diction and energetic voice.

This entire production became successful because of the visionary approach of the Director **Feroz Abbas Khan** with his out of box ideas in Production design and in booking **Ashish Hemrajani** of **Book My Show** to produce the play

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## **Khamohsi**

Aksar baat karne ki kosish main Zubaan Khamosh kyu nahi reh jaata

Kyu nahi gum main asoon nikalte nahi

Kya duniya ki aagosh main yese sawaar hui

ki angaar baraste hain asoon nahi

Kya aise haalaat sahi

kya sirf angaare hi ankhon ka ujala bankar rahe

Aur awaaz uski asoon

Ek baar sirf tum meri nami bhari ankhon ko hi meri pechaan banao aur usi main meri baaton ki nishaani rakhna